

THE WORKS
OF
LEWIS MORRIS

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SONGS OF TWO WORLDS.

FIRST SERIES (1872).

SOUL-MUSIC.

My soul is as a bird
Singing in fair weather,
Deep in shady woodlands through the
evening's dewy calm ;
Every glossy feather
On her full throat stirred,
As she pours out, rapt, unconscious, all
the sweetness of her psalm ;
Mounting high, and higher, higher,
Soaring now, now falling, dying ;
Now through silvery pauses sigh-
ing ;
Throbbing now with joyous strife,
And rushing tides of love and life,
Till some ray of heavenly fire
Shot obliquely through the shade,
Pierces her ; and lo ! the strain
Of the music she has made
Fills her with a sudden pain.

Then she forgets to sing
Her former songs of gladness ;
Sitting mute in silence sweeter than the
old forgotten lays ;
Till anon some note of sadness,
Long-drawn, languishing,
Faint at first, swells onward slowly to
a subtler depth of praise,

As the low, wild, minor, broken
By the ghosts of gayer fancies,
Like a rippling stream advances,
Till the full tide grown too deep,
Whispers first, then falls asleep.
Then, as souls with no word spoken
Grow together, she, mute and still,
Thrills through with a secret voice,
Which the farthest heaven can fill,
And constrains her to rejoice.

And the passer-by who hears,
Not the burst of pleasure,
Swelling upward, sweet, spontaneous,
to the portals of the sky,
But a chastened measure,
Low and full of tears ;
And anon the voiceless silence, when
the last notes sink and die,
Deems some influence malign,
Checks the current of her song ;
For that none are happy long.
Nay ; but to the rapt soul come
Sounds that strike the singer dumb,
And the silence is Divine ;
For when heaven gives back the
strain,
All its joyous tones are o'er ;
First the low sweet notes of pain,
Then, the singer sings no more.

LOVE'S MIRROR.

I SEE myself reflected in thine eyes,
The dainty mirrors set in golden flame
Of eyelash, quiver with a sweet sur-
prise,
And most ingenuous shame.

Like Eve, who hid her from the dread
command
Deep in the dewy blooms of paradise ;
So thy shy soul, love calling, fears to
stand
Discovered at thine eyes.

Or, like a tender little fawn, which lies
Asleep amid the fern, and waking,
hears
Some careless footstep drawing near,
and flies,
Yet knows not what she fears :

So shrinks thy soul ; but, dearest, shrink
not so ;
Look thou into mine eyes as I in
thine :

So our reflected souls shall meet and
grow,
And each with each combine

In something nobler ; as when one has
laid

Opposite mirrors on a cottage wall ;
And lo ! the never-ending colonnade,
The vast palatial hall.

So our twin souls, by one sweet suicide,
Shall fade into an essence more sub-
lime ;
Living through death, and dying glori-
fied,
Beyond the touch of time.

ON A YOUNG POET.

HERE lay him down in peace to take
his rest,
Who tired of singing ere the day was
done.

A little time, a little, beneath the sun,
He tarried and gave forth his artless
song ;

The bird that sings with the dawn,
sings not for long,
Only when dew is on the grass his
breast
Quivers, but his voice is silent long ere
noon.

So sang he once, but might not long
sustain

The high pure note of youth, for soon,
too soon !
He ceased to know the sweet creative
pain

Made still one voice, amid the clamorous
strife,

And proved no more the joys or pains
of life.

And better so than that his voice should
fail,

And sink to earth, and lose its heaven-
like tone ;

Perchance, if he had stayed, the sad
world's moan,

The long low discord of incessant
wrong,

Had marred the perfect cadence of his
song,

And made a grosser music to prevail.

But now it falls as pure upon the ear,
As sings the brown bird to the star of

eve,
Or child's voice in grey minster quiring
clear.

Rather then, give we thanks for him
than grieve.
Thoughts of pure joys which but in
memory live,
More joy than lower present joys can
give.

For him, deep rest or high spontaneous
strains ;
For us, fierce strife and low laborious
song ;
For him, truth's face shining out clear
and strong ;
For us, half lights, thick clouds, and
darkling days.
No longer walks his soul in mortal
ways,
Nor thinks our thoughts, nor feels our
joys or pains
Nor doubts our doubts, nor any more
pursues,
Knowing all things, the sat-off search-
less cause ;
Nor thrills with art, or nature's fairest
hues,
Gazing on absolute beauty's inmost
laws ;
Or lies for ever sunk in dreamless sleep,
Nor recks of us ;—and therefore 'tis we
weep.

But surely if he sleep, some fair faint
dream,
Some still small whisper from his an-
cient home,
Not joy, nor pain, but mixt of each
shall come ;
Or if he wake, the thought of earthly
days
Shall add a tender sweetness to his
praise ;
Tempering the unbroken joyance of his
theme.

And by-and-by the time shall come
when we,
Laden with all our lives, once more
shall meet,
Like friends, who after infinite wastes
of sea,
Look in each other's eyes ; and lo ! the
sweet
Sad fount of memory to its depths is
stirred,
And the past lives again, without a
word.

Mourn not for him ! perchance he lends
his voice
To swell the fulness of the eternal
psalm ;
Or haply, wrapt in nature's holy
calm,
Safe hid within the fruitful womb of
earth,
He ripens slowly to a higher birth.
Mourn not for him ! but let your souls
rejoice.
We know not what we shall be, but are
sure
The spark once kindled by the eternal
breath,
Goes not out quite, but somewhere
doth endure
In that strange life we blindly christen
death.
Somewhere he is, though where we can-
not tell ;
But wheresoe'er God hides him, it is
well.

TO THE SETTING SUN.

STAY, O sweet day, nor fleet so fast
away
For now it is that life revives again,

THE TREASURE OF HOPE.

As the red tyrant sinks beneath the hill ;
 And now soft dews refresh the arid plain ;
 And now the fair bird's voice begins to thrill ;
 With hidden dolours making sweet her strain
 And wakes the woods that all day were so still.

Stay, O sweet day, nor fleet so fast away ;
 For now the rose and all fair flowers that blow
 Give out sweet odours to the perfumed air,
 And the white palace marbles blush and glow,
 And the low, ivy-hidden cot shows fair.
 Why are time's feet so swift, and ours so slow ?
 Haste, laggard ! night will fall ere you are there.

Stay, O sweet day, nor fleet so fast away ;
 Soon the pale full-faced moon will slowly climb
 Up the steep sky and quench the star of love.
 Moonlight is fair, but fairer far the time
 When through the leaves the dying shafts above
 Slope, and the minster sounds its curfew chime,
 And the long shadows lengthen through the grove.

Stay, O sweet day, nor fleet so fast away ;

For, hark ! the chime throbs from the darkling tower ;
 Soon for the last time shall my love be here :
 Fair day, renew thy rays for one brief hour.
 O sweet day, tarry for us, tarry near ;
 To-morrow, love and time will lose their power,
 And sighs be mine, and the unhidden tear.

Stay, O sweet day, nor fleet so fast away.
 But, ah ! thou may'st not ; in the far-off west
 Impatient lovers weary till you rise ;
 Or may be caring naught thou traversest
 The plains betwixt thee and thy final skies :
 Go, then ; though darkness come, we shall be blest,
 Keeping sweet daylight, in each other's eyes.

THE TREASURE OF HOPE.

O FAIR bird, singing in the woods,
 To the rising and the setting sun.
 Does ever any throb of pain
 Thrill through thee ere thy song be done :
 Because the summer fleets so fast ;
 Because the autumn fades so soon ;
 Because the deadly winter treads
 So closely on the steps of June ?

O sweet maid, opening like a rose
 In love's mysterious, honeyed air,
 Dost think sometimes the day will come
 When thou shalt be no longer fair :

When love will leave thee and pass on
 To younger and to brighter eyes ;
 And thou shalt live unloved, alone,
 A dull life, only dowered with sighs ?

O brave youth, panting for the fight,
 To conquer wrong and win thee fame,
 Dost see thyself grown old and spent,
 And thine a still unhonoured name :
 When all thy hopes have come to naught,
 And all thy fair schemes droop and pine
 And wrong still lifts her hydra heads
 To fall to younger arms than thine ?

Nay ; song and love and lofty aims
 May never be where faith is not ;
 Strong souls within the present live :
 The future veiled,—the past forgot :
 Grasping what is, with hands of steel,
 They bend what shall be, to their will ;
 And blind alike to doubt and dread,
 The End, for which they are, fulfil.

THE LEGEND OF FAITH.

THEY say the Lord of time and all the worlds,
 Came to us once, a feeble, new-born child ;
 All-wise, yet dumb ; weak, though omnipotent :
 Surely a heaven-sent vision, for it tells
 How innocence is godlike. And the Lord
 Renews, through childhood, to our world-dimmed eyes,
 The half forgotten splendours of the skies.
 And because motherhood is sacred
 And purer far than any fatherhood,

White flowers are fairer than red fruit,
 and sense
 Brings some retributive pain ; the virgin queen
 Sits 'mid the stars, and cloistered courts
 are filled
 With vain regrets, dead lives, and secret sighs,
 And the long pain of weary litanies.
 And because we, who stand upon the shore,
 See the cold wave sweep up and take
 with it
 White spotless souls, and others lightly soiled,
 Yet with no stain God deems indelible :
 These are His saints mighty to intercede,
 Those in some dim far country tarry,
 and there
 Are purified ; and both are reached by prayer.

And as the faith once given changes not,
 But we are weak as water ; yet is life
 A process, and where growth is not is death.
 God gave His priests infallible power to tell
 The true faith as it is, and how it grew :
 And lo ! the monstrous cycle shows complete,
 And the Church brings the nations to her feet.

BY THE SEA.

A LITTLE country churchyard,
 On the verge of a cliff by the sea ;
 Ah ! the thoughts of the long years past
 and gone
 That the vision brings back to me.

For two ways led from the village,—

One, by the rippled sands,
With their pink shells fresh from the
ebbing wave
For childish little hands.

And one 'mid the heath, and the
threat'ning

Loud bees with the yellow thighs,
And, twinkling out of the golden furze,
The marvellous butterflies.

And the boom of the waves on the
shingle,

And the hymn of the lark to the sun ;
Made Sabbath sounds of their own, ere
the chime
Of the church-going bell had begun.

I remember the churchyard studded
With peasants who loitered and read
The sad little legends, half effaced,
On the moss-grown tombs of the
dead.

And the gay graves of little children,
Fashioned like tiny cots ;
With their rosemary and southernwood,
And blue-eyed forget-me-nots.

Till the bell by degrees grew impatient,
Then ceased as the parsonage door
Opened wide for the surpliced vicar,
And we loitered and talked no more.

I remember the cool, dim chancel,
And the drowsy hum of the prayers ;
And the rude psalms vollied from sea-
faring throats
As if to take heaven unawares.

Till, when sermon-time came, by per-
mission
We stole out among the graves,

And saw the great ocean a-blaze in the
sun,

And heard the deep roar of the waves.

And clung very close together,
As we spelt out with wonder and
tears,

How a boy lay beneath who was
drowned long ago,
And was "Aged eleven years."

And heard, with a new-born terror,
The first surge of the infinite Sea,
Whose hither-shore is the shore of
Death,
And whose further, the Life to be.

"Did the sea swallow up little children ?
Could God see the wickedness done?
Nor spare one swift-winged seraph to
save
From the thousands around His
throne ?"

"Was he still scarce older than we
were,
Still only a boy of eleven ?
Were child-angels children always
In the beautiful courts of heaven ?"

Ah me ! of those childish dreamers,
One has solved the dark riddle since
then :

And knows the dread secret which
none may know
Who walk in the ways of men.

The other has seen the splendour
And mystery fading away ;
Too wise or too dull to take thought or
care
For aught but the needs of the
day.

VOICES.

OH ! sometimes when the solemn organ rolls
 Its stream of sound down gray historic aisles ;
 Or the full, high-pitched struggling symphony
 Pursues the fleeting melody in vain :
 Like a fawn through shadowy groves, or heroine
 Voiced like a lark, pours out in burning song
 Her love or grief ; or when, to the rising stars
 Linked village maidens chant the hymn of eve ;
 Or Sabbath concourse, flushed and dewy-eyed
 Booms its full bass ; or before tasks begun,
 Fresh childish voices sanctify the morn :
 My eyes grow full, my heart forgets to beat.
 What is this mystic yearning fills my being ?

Hark ! the low music wakes, and soft and slow
 Wanders at will through flowery fields of sound ;
 Climbs gentle hills, and sinks in sunny vales,
 And stoops to cull sweet way-side blooms, and weaves
 A dainty garland ; then, grown tired, casts down
 With careless hand the fragrant coronal,
 And child-like sings itself to sleep.

Anon

The loud strain rises like a strong knight armed,

Battling with wrong ; or passionate seer of God
 Scathing with tongue of fire the hollow shows,
 The vain deceits of men ; or law-giver, Parting in thunder from the burning hill
 With face afame ; or with fierce rush of wings
 And blazing brand, upon the crest of Sin,
 The swift archangel swooping ; or the roll
 Which follows on the lightning ;—all are there
 In that great hurry of sound.
 And then the voice Grows thinner like a lark's, and soars and soars,
 And mounts in circles, higher, higher, higher,
 Up to heaven's gate, and lo ! the un-earthly song
 Thrills some fine inner chord, and the swift soul,
 Eager and fluttering like a prisoned bird,
 Breaks from its cage, and soars aloft to join
 The enfranchised sound, and for a moment seems
 To touch on some dim border-land of being,
 Full of high thought and glorious enterprise
 And vague creative fancies, till at length
 Waxed grosser than the thin ethereal air,
 It sinks to earth again.

And then a strain Sober as is the tender voice of home,
 Unbroken like a gracious life, and lo

Young children sit around me, and the love
 I never knew is mine, and so my eyes
 Grow full, and all my being is thrilled with tears.

What is this strange new life, this finer sense,
 This passionate exaltation, which doth force
 Like the weird Indian juggler, instantly
 My soul from seed to flower, from flower to fruit,
 Which lifts me out of self, and bids me tread
 Without a word, on dim aerial peaks, Impossible else, and rise to glorious thoughts,
 High hopes, and inarticulate fantasies Denied to soberer hours? No spoken thought
 Of bard or seer can mount so far, or lift
 The soul to such transcendent heights, or work
 So strong a spell of love, or roll along Such passionate troubled depths. No painter's hand
 Can limn so clear, the luminous air serene
 Of Paradise, the halcyon deep, the calm
 Of the eternal snows, the eddy and whirl
 Of mortal fight, the furious flood let loose
 From interlacing hills, the storm which glooms
 Over the shoreless sea. Our speech too oft
 Is bound and fettered by such narrow laws,

That words which to one nation pierce the heart,
 To another are but senseless sounds, or weak
 And powerless to stir the soul; but this Speaks with a common tongue, uses a speech
 Which all may understand, or if it bear Some seeds of difference in it, only such
 As separates gracious sisters, like in form,
 But one by gayer fancies touched, and one
 Rapt by sweet graver thoughts alone, and both
 Mighty to reach the changing moods of the soul,
 Or grave or gay, and though sometimes they be
 Mated with unintelligible words,
 Or feeble and unworthy, yet can lend A charm to gild the worthless utterance, And wing the sordid chrysalis to float Amid the shining stars.
 Oh strange sweet power,
 Ineffable, oh gracious influence,
 I know not whence thou art, but this I know.
 Thou holdest in thy hand the silver key That can unlock the sacred fount of tears,
 Which falling make life green; the hidden spring
 Of purer fancies and high sympathies.
 No mirth is thine, thou art too high for mirth,—
 Like Him who wept but smiled not:— mirth is born
 On the low plains of thoughts best reached by words.
 But those who scale the untrodden mountain peak,

Or sway upon the trembling spire, are far
 From laughter ; so thy gracious power divine,
 Not sad but solemn, stirs the well of tears,
 But not mirth's shallow spring : tears are divine,
 But mirth is of the earth, a creature born
 Of careless youth and joyance ; satisfied With that which is ; parched by no nobler thirst
 For that which might be ; pained by no regret
 For that which was, but is not : but for thee.
 Oh, fair mysterious power, the whole great scheme
 Lies open like a book ; and if the charm
 Of its high beauty makes thee sometimes gay,
 Yet 'tis an awful joy, so mixed with thought,
 That even Mirth grows grave, and evermore
 The myriad possibilities unfulfilled,
 The problem of Creation, the immense Impenetrable depths of thought, the vague
 Perplexities of being, touch thy lips And keep thee solemn always.
 Oh, fair voice,
 Oh virginal, sweet interpreter, reveal Our inner selves to us, lay bare the springs;
 The hidden depths of life, the high desires
 Which lurk there unsuspected, the remorse
 Which never woke before ; unclothe the soul
 Of this its shroud of sense, and let it mount,
 On the harmonious beat of thy light wings,
 Up to those heights where life is so attuned,
 So pure and self-concordant ; filled so deep
 With such pervading beauty that no voice
 Mars the unheard ineffable harmony, And o'er white plain and breathless summit reigns
 A silence sweeter than the sweetest sound.

WEAKNESS MADE STRONG.

IF I were poor and weak, Bankrupt of hope, and desolate of love ; Without a tongue to speak The strange dumb thoughts of thee which through me move ; Then would I freely venture, sweet, To cast my soul down at thy feet.

Or were I proud and great ; Were all men envious, and all women kind,
 And yet my high estate Showed poor beside the riches of my mind : Then would I boldly stoop, to rise Up to the height of thy dear eyes.

But being not weak nor strong, Cast in the common mould of coarser clay ; Sure 'twere to do thee wrong To set my humble homage in thy way,

And cloud thy sunny morn, which I
would fain
Keep clear and fair, with my poor
private pain.

Only since love and I are so ingrown,
That for my weakness is my love so
strong;
And scarce I know what love's is, what
mine own,
Nor whether love or I inspire my
song :
Take thou my weakness to thy strength,
and give
Strength to my weakness, sweet, and
bid me live.

WAKING.

OPEN, my soul, thy stately portals
wide ;
Open full wide, and let thy King
come in !
How shall he come ? In royal pomp
and pride,
Ushered by braying trumpets' clamor-
ous din ;
Clothed round with purple ; crowned
with burning gold :
A kingly presence, glorious to behold ?

Nay ; for he is no mortal king, to come
With trumpet peals and crowds and
garish state ;
But silent to the soul he makes his
home,
He enters by some lowly postern
gate !
And she, within her chambers far with-
drawn,
Cries like the wakeful bird that greets
the dawn.

It may be 'she is seated 'mid the
throng,
Crowned with the flowers of life and
youth and health ;
Thrilled through by breathing art or
passionate song,
Or faint with hot pursuit of fame or
wealth ;
Rapt by the glorious thoughts of saints
or seers,
Or radiant with the blessed dew of
tears.

And then the wicket swings without a
sound,
And lo ! a ghostly presence, pale and
gray,—
Sad eyes which dwell not on the things
around,
But gaze for ever on the Far-off
Day !
Then a low voice, whispering, " Thy
King is come ;
Rejoice, be glad, for here he makes
his home."

Then rises she and hastens to the
gate,—
Her royal gate, and there she casts
her down :
Prone at his feet bewails her low
estate,
Yet prays him he will enter to his
own !
Spurns from her all her robes of pride,
and stands,
Knowing her shame, to do her Lord's
commands,

Whom with a touch he fashions for her
part ;
Dowers with the precious gifts of bairn
or sage ;

The hand to fix the dreams of deathless art,

The imperial will, the patriot's noble rage :

Or fills with such fine affluence of love,
That she grows holy as the saints above.

Then open, O my soul ! thy portals wide,

Open, and let thy Lord and Ruler come ;

Open, if haply he may here abide,
And make within thee his eternal home.

Open thy gates, thy halls, thine inmost shrine,

Till all are flooded with the Light divine.

Where the rough seamen come to play,
And wives, for dear ones far away.

There, on a starry orb, there stands
A heavenly goddess, proud and fair ;
No infant holds she in her hands

Which must a queenly sceptre bear.
Nay ; wonder not, for this is she
Who rules the fury of the sea.

Star of the sea, they call her, yet
Liker to Heré doth she show,
Than Aphrodité, rising wet
From the white waves, with limbs aglow.

Calmer she seems, more pure and sweet,
To the poor kneelers at her feet.

Before her still the vestal fires
Burn unextinguished day and night ;
And the sweet frankincense expires
And fair flowers blow, and gems are bright :

For a great power in heaven is she,
This star and goddess of the sea.

Around the temple, everywhere,
Rude tablets hung, attest her might ;
Here the fierce surge she smooths, and there

Darts downward on a bar of light ;
To quench the blazing ship, or save
The shipwrecked from the hungry wave.

And sea-gifts round the shrine are laid,
Poor offerings, costlier far than gold :
Such as the earlier heathen made,

To the twin Deities of old,—

Toy ships, shells, coral, glittering spar,
Brought here by grateful hands from far.

AT HAVRE DE GRACE.

ABOVE the busy Norman town,

The high precipitous sea-cliffs rise,
And from their summit looking down

The twin-lights shine with lustrous eyes ;

Far out upon the fields of foam,
The first to greet the wanderer home.

Man here has known at last to tame

Nature's wild forces to his will ;

Those are the lightning's fires which flame,

From yon high towers with ray so still :

And knowledge, piercing through the night

Of time, has summoned forth the light.

And there, hard by the lighthouse door,

The earthly set by the divine ;

At a stone's cast, or scarcely more,
Rises a little pagan shrine,

A very present help indeed,
 This goddess is to whom they bow ;
 We seek Thy face with hearts that
 bleed,
 And straining eyes, dread Lord ! but
 Thou
 Hidest Thyself so far away,
 Our thoughts scarce reach Thee as we
 pray.

But is this she, whom the still voice
 Of angels greeted in the night ;
 Bidding the poor maid's heart rejoice,
 With visions hid from wiser sight :
 This heathen nymph, this tinselled
 queen,
 First of all mothers who have been ?

Gross hearts and purblind eyes, to
 make
 An idol of a soul so sweet !
 Could you no meaner essence take,
 No brazen image with clay feet ;
 No saint from out the crowd of lies,
 False signs and shameful prodigies ?

For this one bears too great a name,
 Above all other women blest ;
 The blessed mother,—all her fame
 Is His who nestled to her breast :
 They do but dull her glory down,
 These childless arms, this earthly
 crown.

Poor peasant mother ! scarce a word
 Thou spak'st, the long-drawn years
 retain ;
 Only thy womb once bare the Lord ;
 Only thou knew'st the joy, the
 pain,
 The high hope seeming quenched in
 blood
 That marked thy awful motherhood.

No trace of all thy life remains,
 From His first childhood to the
 cross ;
 A life of little joys and pains,
 Of humble gain and trivial loss :
 Contented if the ewes should bear
 Twin lambs, or wheat were full in ear.

Or if sometimes the memory
 Of that dread message of the night
 Troubled thy soul, there came to thee
 New precious duties ; till the flight,
 The desert sands, the kneeling kings,
 Showed but as half-forgotten things.

Or sometimes, may be, pondering
 deep
 On miracles of word and deed,
 Vague doubts across thy soul would
 creep,
 Still faithful to the older creed :
 Could this thy son indeed be He,
 This child who prattled at thy knee ?

And of thy after-life, thy age,
 Thy death, no record ; not a line
 On all the fair historic page
 To mark the life these hold divine :
 Only some vague tradition, faint
 As the sick story of a saint.

But thou no longer art to-day
 The sweet maid-mother, fair, and
 pure ;
 Vast time-worn reverend temples gray,
 Throne thee in majesty obscure ;
 And long aisles stretch in minsters
 high,
 'Twixt thee, fair peasant, and the sky.

They seek to honour thee, who art
 Beyond all else a mother indeed ;

With hateful vows that blight the heart,
With childless lives, and souls that
bleed :

As if their dull hymns' barren strain
Could fill a mother with aught but
pain !

To the gross earth they bind thee down
With coils of sable, chain on chain ;
From plague or war to save the town ;
To give, or hold ; the sun, or rain ;
To whirl through air a favourite
shrine,—

These are thy functions, and divine.

And see, in long procession rise
The fair Madonnas of all time ;
They gaze from sweet maternal eyes,
The dreams of every Christian clime :
Brown girls and icy queens, the breast
And childish lips proclaim them blest.

Till as the gradual legend grew,
Born without stain, and scorning
death ;
Heavenward thou soarest through the
blue,
While saints and seers aspire beneath :
And fancy-nurtured cam'st to be
Queen over sky and earth and sea.

Oh, sin ! oh, shame ! oh, folly ! R's : ;
Poor heathen, think to what you
bow ;
Consider, beyond God's equal skies,
What pains that faithful soul must
know,—
She a poor peasant on the throne
Raised for the Lord of Life, alone.

O sweet ! O heart of hearts ! O pure
Above all purest maids of earth !
O simple child, who didst endure
The burden of that awful birth :

Heart, that the keenest sword didst
know,
Soul bowed by alien loads of woe !

Sweet soul ! have pity ; intercede,
Oh mother of mothers, pure and
meek ;
They know no evil,—rise and plead
For these poor wandering souls and
weak ;
Tear off those pagan rags, and lead
Their worship where 'tis due indeed.

For wheresoever there is home,
And mothers yearn with sacred
love,
There, since from Heaven itself they
come,
Are symbols of the life above :
Again the sweet maid-mother mild,
Again the fair Eternal child.

WHEN I AM DEAD.

WHEN I am dead and turned to
dust,
Let men say what they will, I care not
aught ;
Let them say I was careless, indolent,
Wasted the precious hours in dreaming
thought,
Did not the good I might have done,
but spent
My soul upon myself,—sometimes let
rise
Thick mists of earth betwixt me and
the skies :
What must be must.

But not that I betrayed a trust ;
Broke some girl's heart, and left her to
her shame ;

LOVE'S SUICIDE—THE RIVER OF LIFE.

Sneered young souls out of faith ; rose
by deceit ;
Listed by credulous mobs to wealth and
fame ;
Waxed fat while good men waned, by
lie and cheat ;
Cringed to the strong ; oppressed the
poor and weak :
When men say this, may some find
voice to speak,
Though I am dust.

LOVE'S SUICIDE.

ALAS for me for that my love is dead !
Buried deep down, and may not rise
again ;
Self-murdered, vanished, gone beyond
recall,
And this is all my pain.

'Tis not that she I loved is gone from
me,
She lives and grows more lovely day
by day ;
Not Death could kill my love, but
though she lives,
My love has died away.

Nor was it that a form or face more fair
Forswore my troth, for so my love
had proved
Eye-deep alone, not rooted in the soul:
And 'twas not thus I loved.

Nor that by too long dalliance with
delight
And recompence of love, my love had
grown
Surfeit with sweets, like some tired bee
that flags
'Mid roses over-blown.

None of these slew my love, but some
cold wind,
Some chill of doubt, some shadowy
dissidence,
Born out of too great concord, did o'er-
cloud
Love's subtle inner sense.

So one sweet changeless chord, too long
sustained,
Falls at its close into a lower tone :
So the swift train, sped on the long,
straight way,
Sways, and is overthrown.

For difference is the soul of life and
love,
And not the barren oneness weak
souls prize :
Rest springs from strife, and dissonant
chords beget
Divinest harmonies.

THE RIVER OF LIFE.

BRIGHT with unnumbered laughter,
and swollen by a thousand tears,
Rushes along, through upland and low-
land, the river of life ;
Sometimes foaming and broken, and
sometimes silent and slumbrous,
Sometimes through rocky glens, and
sometimes through flowery plains.
Sometimes the mountains draw near,
and the black depths swirl at
their bases,
Sometimes the limitless meads fade on
the verge of the sky,
Sometimes the forests stand round, and
the great trees cast terrible
shadows,
Sometimes the golden wheat waves, and
girls fill their pitchers and sing.

Always the same strange flow, through
changes and chances unchanging,
Always—in youth and in age, in calm
and in tempest the same—
Whether it sparkle transparent and
give back the blue like a mirror,
Or sweep on turbid with flood, and
black with the garbage of
towns—
Whether the silvery scale of the min-
now flash on the pebbles,
Or whether the poisonous ooze cling
for a shroud round the dead—
Whether it struggle through shoals of
white blooms and feathery
grasses,
Or bear on its bosom the hulls of ocean-
tost navies—the same.

Foul it with filth, yet the deltas grow
green and the ocean is clear.
Always the sun and the winds will strike
its broad surface and gather
Some purer drops from its depths, to
float in the clouds of the sky :—
Soon these shall fall once again, and
replenish the full-flowing river.
Roll round then, O mystical cycle !
flow onward, ineffable stream !

Flow on, O mystical river, flow on
through desert and city ;
Broken or smooth, flow onward into
the Infinite sea.
Who knows what urges thee on, what
dark laws and cosmical forces
Stain thee or keep thee pure, and
bring thee at last to thy goal ?
What is the cause of thy rest or unrest,
of thy foulness or pureness ?
What is the secret of life, or the painful
riddle of death ?
Why is it better to be than to cease, to
flow on than to stagnate ?
Why is the river-stream sweet, while
the sea is as bitter as gall ?
Surely we know not at all, but the
cycle of Being is eternal,
Life is eternal as death, tears are eternal
as joy.
As the stream flowed, it will flow ;
though 'tis sweet, yet the sea
will be bitter :

O LORD, the Giver of my days,
My heart is ready, my heart is ready ;
I dare not hold my peace, nor pause,
For I am fain to sing Thy praise.

I praise Thee not, with impious pride,
For that Thy partial hand has given
Bounties of wealth or form or brain,
Good gifts to other men denied.

Nor weary Thee with blind request,
For fancied goods Thy hand withholdst ;
I know not what to fear or hope,
Nor aught but that Thy will is best.

Not whence I come, nor whither I go,
Nor wherefore I am here, I know ;
Nor if my life's tale ends on earth,
Or mounts to bliss, or sinks to woe.

Nor know I aught of Thee, O Lord ;
Behind the veil Thy face is hidden :
We faint, and yet Thy face is hidden ;
We cry,—Thou answerest not a word.

But this I know, O Lord, Thou art,
And by Thee I too live and am ;
We stand together, face to face,
Thou the great whole, and I the part.

We stand together, soul to soul,
Alone amidst Thy waste of worlds :
Unchanged, though all creation fade,
And Thy swift suns forget to roll.

Wherefore, because my life is Thine,
Because, without Thee I were not ;
Because, as doth the sea, the sun,
My nature gives back the Divine.

Because my being with ceaseless flow
Sets to Thee as the brook to the sea :
Turns to Thee, as the flower to the sun,
And seeks what it may never know.

Because, without me Thou hadst been
For ever, seated midst Thy suns ;
Marking the soulless cycles turn,
Yet wert Thyself unknown, unseen.

I praise Thee, everlasting Lord,
In life and death, in heaven and hell :
What care I, since indeed Thou art,
And I the creature of Thy word.

Only if such a thing may be :
When all Thy infinite will is done,
Take back the soul Thy breath has
given,
And let me lose myself in Thee.

IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE.

UNDER the picture gallery wall,
As a sea-leaf clings to a wave-worn
rock,
Nor shrinks from the surging impetu-
ous shock
Of the breakers which gather and
whiten and fall—
A child's form crouches, nor seems to
heed

The ceaseless eddy and whirl of men :
Men and women with hearts that bleed,
Men and women of wealth and fame,
High in honour, or sunk in shame,
Pass on like phantoms, and pass again.
And he lies there like a weed.

A child's form, said I ; but looking
again

It is only the form that is childish now,
For age has furrowed the low dull
brow,
And marked the pale face with its lines
of pain.

Yet but few years have fled, since I
first passed by,
For a dwarf's life is short if you go by
the sun,

And marked in worn features and lus-
treless eye

Some trace of youth's radiance, though
faint and thin,

But now, oh, strange jest ! there's a
beard to his chin.

And he lies there, grown old ere his
youth is done,
With his poor limbs bent awry.

What a passer-by sees, is a monstrous
head,

With a look in the eyes as of those who
gaze

On some far-off sight with a dumb
amaze ;

A face as pale as the sheeted dead,
A frail body propped on a padded
crutch,

And lean long fingers, which flutter the
keys

Of an old accordion, returning their
touch

With some poor faint echoes of popular
song,

Trivial at all times and obsolete long,
Psalm-tunes, and African melodies,
Not differing very much.

And there he sits nightly in heat and cold,
When the fountains fall soft on the stillness of June,
Or when the sharp East sings its own shrill tune,
Patiently playing and growing old.
The long year waxes and wanes, the great
Flash by in splendour from rout or ball,
Statesmen grown weary with long debate,
Hurry by homewards, and fling him alms ;
Pitiful women, touched by the psalms,
Bringing back innocence, stoop by the wall
Where he lies at Dives' gate.

What are his thoughts of, stranded there?
While life ebbs and flows by, again and again,
Does the old sad Problem vex his poor brain?
" Why is the world so pleasant and fair,
Why, am I only who did no wrong
Crippled and bent out of human form ?
Why are other men tall and strong ?
Surely if all men were made to rejoice,
Seeing that we come without will or choice,
were better to crawl for a day like a worm,
to lie like this so long !

[The blind shuffles by with a tap of his staff,

The tired tramp plods to the workhouse ward,—
But he carries his broad back as straight as a lord
And the blind man can hear his little ones laugh,
While I lie here like a weed on the sand,
With these crooked limbs, paining me night and day.
Is it true, what they tell of a far-off land,
In the sweet old faith which was preached for the poor,—
Where none shall be weary or pained any more,
Nor change shall enter nor any decay,
And the stricken down shall stand?"

And perhaps sometimes when the sky is clear,
And the stars show like lamps on the sweet summer night,
Some chance chord struck with a sudden delight,
Soars aloft with his soul, and brings Paradise near.
And then—for even nature is sometimes kind—
He lies stretched under palms with a harp of gold ;
Or is whirled on by coursers as fleet as the wind ;
And is no more crippled, nor weak nor bent ;
No more painful nor impotent ;
No more hungry, nor weary nor cold,—
But of perfect form and mind.

Or maybe his thoughts are of humbler cast,
For hunger and cold are real indeed ;
And he looks for the hour when his toil shall be past,

And he with sufficient for next day's
need :
Some humble indulgence of food or
fire,
Some music-hall ditty, or marvellous
book,
Or whatever it be such poor souls
desire ;
And with this little solace, for God
would fain
Make even his measures of joy and
pain,
He drones happily on in his quiet
nook,
With hands that never tire.

Well, these random guesses must go
for nought
Seeing it is wiser and easier far
To weigh to an atom the faintest star,
Than to sound the dim depths of a
brother's thought.
But whenever I hear those poor snatches
of song,
And see him lie maimed in body and
soul,
While I am straight and healthy and
strong,
I seem to redden with a secret shame,
That we should so differ who should be
the same,
Till I hear their insolent chariot wheels
roll
The millionaires along.

WATCH.

Oh, hark ! the languid air is still,
The fields and woods seem hushed
and dumb.
But listen, and you shall hear a thrill,
An inner voice of silence come,

Stray notes of birds, the hum of bees,
The brook's light gossip on its way,
Voices of children heard at play,
Leaves whispering of a coming breeze.

Oh, look ! the sea is fallen asleep,
The sail hangs idle evermore ;
Yet resolute from the outer deep,
The low wave sobs upon the shore.
Silent the dark cave ebbs and fills,
Silent the broad weeds wave and
sway ;
Yet yonder fairy fringe of spray
Is born of surges vast as hills.

Oh, see ! the sky is deadly dark,
There shines not moon nor any
star ;
But gaze awhile, and you shall mark
Some gleam of glory from afar :
Some half-hidden planet's vagrant ray ;
Some lightning flash which wakes
the world ;
Night's pirate banner slowly furled ;
And, eastward, some faint flush of day.

DROWNED.

ONLY eighteen winters old !
Lay her with a tender hand
On the delicate, ribbed sea-sand :
Stiff and cold ; ay, stiff and cold.

What she has been, who shall care ?
Looking on her as she lies
With those stony, sightless eyes,
And the sea-weed in her hair.

Think, O mothers ! how the deep
All the dreary night did rave ;
Thundering foam and crested wave,
While your darlings lay asleep.

How she cleft the midnight air ;
 And the idiot surge beneath
 Whirled her sea-ward to her death,
 Angry that she was so fair.

Tossed her, beat her, till no more
 Rage could do, through all the night ;
 Then with morning's ghastly light,
 Flung her down upon the shore.

Mother ! when brief years ago
 You were happy in your child.
 Smiling on her as she smiled,
 Thought you she would perish so ?

Man ! who made her what she is ;
 What, if when you falsely swore
 You would love her more and more,
 You had seen her lie like this.

And, O Infinite Cause ! didst Thou,
 When Thou mad'st this hapless
 child,
 Dowered with passions, fierce and
 wild,
 See her lie as she lies now ?

Filled with wild revolt and rage,
 All I feel I may not speak ;
 Fate so strong, and we so weak,
 Like rats in a cage,—like rats in a
 cage.

THE WANDERER.

I REARED my virgin Soul on dainty
 food,
 I fed her with rich fruit and garnered
 gold
 From gardens planted by the pious
 care
 Of the wise dead of old.

The long procession of the fabulous
 Past,
 Rolled by for me—the earliest dawn of
 time ;

The seven great Days ; the garden and
 the sword ;
 The first red stain of crime ;

The fierce rude chiefs who smote, and
 burned, and slew,
 And all for God ; the pitiless tyrants
 grand,
 Who piled to heaven the eternal monu-
 ments,
 Unchanged amid the sand ;

The fairy commonwealths, where Free-
 dom first
 Inspired the ready hand and glowing
 tongue
 To a diviner art and sweeter song
 Than men have feigned or sung :

The strong bold sway that held man-
 kind in thrall,
 Soldier and jurist marching side by side,
 Till came the sure slow blight, when
 all the world
 Grew sick, and swooned, and died ;

Again the long dark night, when
 Learning dozed
 Safe in her cloister, and the world
 without
 Rang with fierce shouts of war and
 cries of pain,
 Base triumph, baser rout ;

Till rose a second dawn of light again,
 Again the freemen stood in firm array
 Behind the foss, and Pope and Kaiser
 came,
 Wondered and turned away ;

And then the broadening stream, till
the sleek priest
Aspired to tread the path the Pagan
trod,
And Rome fell once again, and the
brave North
Rose from the church to God.

All these passed by for me, till the
vast tide
Grew to a sea too wide for any shore ;
Then doubt o'erspread me, and a cold
disgust,
And I would look no more.

For something said, "The Past is dead
and gone,
Let the dead bury their dead, why
strive with Fate ?
Why seek to feed the children on the
husks
Their rude forefathers ate ?"

" For even were the Past reflected back
As in a mirror, in the historic page,
For us its face is strange, seeing that
the race
Betters from age to age."

" And if, hearing the tale we told our-
selves,
We marvel how the monstrous fable
grew ;
How in these far-off years shall men
discern
The fictive from the true ? "

Then turned I to the broad domain of
Art,
To seek if haply Truth lay hidden there ;
Well knowing that of old close links
connect
The true things and the fair.

Fair forms I found, and rounded limbs
divine,
The maiden's grace, the tender curves
of youth,
The majesty of happy perfect years,
But only half the truth.

For there is more, I thought, in man,
and higher,
Than animal graces cunningly com-
bined ;
Since oft within the unlovely frame is
set
The shining, flawless mind.

So I grew weary of the pallid throng,
Deep - bosomed maids and stalwart
heroes tall.
One type I saw, one earthy animal seal
Of comeliness in all !

But not the awful, mystical human soul—
The soul that grovels and aspires in
turn—
The soul that struggles outwards into
light
Through lips and eyes that burn.

So, from the soulless marbles, white
and bare
And cold, too-perfect art, I turned and
sought
The canvases, where Christian hands
have left
The fruits of holy thought.

Passion I found, and love, and godlike
pain,
The swift soul rapt by mingled hopes
and fears,
Eyes lit with glorious light from the
Unseen,
Or dim with sacred tears.

But everywhere around the living tree
I marked the tangled growths of fable
twine,

And gross material images confuse
The earthly and divine.

I saw the Almighty Ruler of the
worlds,
The one unfailing Source of Light and
Love,
A sullen gray-beard set on rolling
clouds,
Armed with the bolts of Jove.

The Eternal Son, a shapeless new-born
child,
Supine upon His peasant-mother's
knees,
Or else a ghastly victim, crushed and
worn
By physical agonies.

The virgin mother—now a simple girl ;
Or old and blurred with tears, and wan
with sighs ;
And now a goddess, oft-times giving
back
The harlot-model's eyes.

Till faring on what spark of heaven
was there,
Grew pale, then went out quite ; and
in its stead,
Dull copies of dull common life usurped
The empire of the dead.

Or if sometimes, rapt in a sweet sus-
pense,
I knew a passionate yearning thrill my
soul,
As down long aisles from losty quires
I heard
The solemn music roll ;

Or if at last the long-drawn symphony,
After much weary wandering seemed to
soar

To a finer air, and subtle measures born
On some diviner shore,

I thought how much of poor mechani-
cal skill,
How little fire of heart, or force of
brain,
Was theirs who first devised or now
declared
That magical sweet strain ;

And how the art was partial, not im-
mense,
As Truth is, or as Beauty, but confined
To this our later Europe, not spread
out,
Wide as the width of mind.

* * * * *
So then from Art, and all its empty
shows
And outward-seeming truth, I turned
and sought
The secret springs of knowledge which
lie hid
Deep in the wells of thought.

The hoary thinkers of the Past I knew ;
Whose dim vast thoughts, to too great
stature grown,
Flashed round as fitful lightning flashes
round
The black vault of the Unknown.

Who, seeing that things are Many, and
yet are One ;
That all things suffer change, and yet
remain—
That opposite flows from opposite, Life
and Death,
Love, Hatred, Pleasure, Pain—

Raised high upon the mystical throne
of life
Some dim abstraction, hopeful to un-
wind
The tangled maze of things, by one
rude guess
Of an untutored mind.

The sweet Ideal Essences revealed,
To that high poet-thinker's eyes I
saw ;
The archetypes which underset the
world
With one broad perfect Law.

The fair fantastic Commonwealth, too
fair
For earth, wherein the wise alone bore
rule—
So wise that oftentimes the sage himself
Shows duller than the fool ;

And that white soul, clothed with a
satyr's form,
Which shone beneath the laurels day
by day,
And, fired with burning faith in God
and Right,
Doubted men's doubts away ;

And him who took all knowledge for
his own,
And with the same swift logical sword
laid bare
The depths of heart and mind, the
mysteries
Of earth and sea and air ;

And those on whom the visionary East
Worked in such sort, that knowledge
grew to seem
An ecstasy, a sudden blaze, revealed
To crown the mystic's dream ;

Till, once again, the old light faded
out,
And left no trace of that fair day re-
main—

Only a barren method, binding down
Men's thoughts with such a chain

That knowledge sank self-slain, like
some stout knight
Clogged by his harness ; nor could wit
devise
Aught but ignoble quibbles, subtly
mixed
With dull theologies.

Not long I paused with these ; but
passed to him
Who, stripping, like a skilful wrestler,
cast
From his strong arms the precious
deadly web,
The vesture of the past ;

And looked in Nature's eyes, and, foot
to foot,
Strove with her daily, till the witch at
length
Gave up, reluctant, to the questing
mind
The secret of her strength.

And then the old fight, fought on
modern fields,—
Whether we know by sense or inward
sight—
Whether a law within, or use alone,
Mark out the bounds of right—

All these were mine ; and then the
ancient doubt,
Which scarce kept silence as this master
taught

The undying soul, or that one subtly probed	Enchained me. Day by day, things strange and new
The process of our thought,	Rose on me; day by day, I seemed to tread
And shuddered at the dreadful innocent talk	Fresh footsteps of the true.
To the cicala's chirp beneath the trees—	I laid life's house bare to its inmost room »
Love poised on silver wings, love fallen and fouled	With lens and scalpel, marked the simple cell
By black iniquities ;	Which might one day be man or creep- ing worm, For nught that sense could tell,—
And laughed to scorn their quest of cosmic law,	Thrust life to its utmost home, a speck of gray
Saw folly in the Mystic and the Schools, And in the Newer Method gleams of truth	No more nor higher, traced the wondrous plan,
Obscured by childish rules ;	The wise appliances which seem to shape The dwelling-place of man,—
Rose to a giant's strength, and always cried—	Nor halted here, but thirsted still to know,
You shall not find the truth here, she is gone ;	And, with half-blinded eyesight, loved to pore
What glimpse men had, was ages since, and these	On that scarce visible world, born of decay
Go idly babbling on—	Or stranded on the shore.
Jangles of opposite creeds, alike un- true,	Marked how the Mother works with earth and gas,
Quaint puzzles, meaningless logoma- chies,	And with what subtle alchemy knows to blend
Efforts to pierce the infinite core of things	The vast conflicting forces of the world To one harmonious end ;
With purblind finite eyes.	And, nightly gazing on the splendid stars,
Go, get you gone to Nature, she is kind To reasonable worship ; she alone Thinks scorn, when humble seekers ask for bread,	Essayed in vain with reverent eye to trace
To offer them a stone.	The chain of miracles by which men learnt
* * * *	The mysteries of space ;
And Nature drew me to her, and awhile	

And toiled awhile with spade and hammer, to learn
The long long sequences of life, and those
Unnumbered cycles of forgotten years
Ere life's faint light arose ;

And loved to trace the strange sweet life of flowers,
And all the scarce suspected links which span
The gulf betwixt the fungus and the tree,
And 'twixt the tree and man.

Then suddenly, "What is it that I know?
I know the shows and changes, not the cause ;
I know but long successions, which usurp
The name and rank of Laws.

"And what if the design I think I see
Be but a pitiless order, through the long
Slow wear of chance and suffering working out
Salvation for the strong ?

"How else, if scheme there be, can I explain
The cripple or the blind, the ravening jaw,
The infinite waste of life, the plague, the sword,
The evil, thifless law,

"Or seeming errors of design, or strange
Complexities of structure, which suggest

A will which sported with its power,
or worked
Not careful for the best?"

I could not know the scheme, nor therefore spend
My soul in painful efforts to conform
With those who lavished life and brain
to trace
The story of a worm ;

Nor yet with those who, prizing overmuch
The unmeaning jargon of their science,
sought
To hide, by arrogance, from God and man
Their poverty of thought,

And, blind with fact and stupefied by law,
Lost sight of the Creator, and became Dull bigots, narrowed to a hopeless creed,
And priests in all but name.

* * * *

Thus, tired with seeking truth, and not content
To dwell with those weak souls who love to reign
Unending problems of the life and love
Which they can ne'er explain ;

Nor those who, parrot-like, are proud to clothe
In twenty tongues the nothing that they know ;
Nor those whom barren lines and numbers blind
To all things else below ;

And half-suspecting, when the poet sang
And drew my soul to his, and round me cast

Fine cords of fancy, but a sleight of words,
Part stolen from the past—

I thought, My life lies not with books,
but men !

Surely the nobler part is his who guides

The State's great ship through hidden rocks and sands,
Rude winds and popular tides,—

A freeman amongst freemen,—and contrives,
By years of thought and labour, to withdraw
Some portion of their load from lives bent down
By old abusive law !

A noble task ; but how to walk with those

Who by fate's subtle irony ever hold
The freeman's ear—the cunning fluent knave,
The dullard big with gold ?

And how, when worthier souls bore rule, to hold
Faction more dear than Truth, or stoop to cheat,
With cozening words and shallow flatteries
The Solons of the street ?

Or, failing this, to wear a hireling sword—

Ready, whate'er the cause, to kill and slay,

And float meanwhile, a gilded butterfly,

My brief inglorious day—

Or, in the name of Justice, to confuse, For hire, with shameless tongue and subtle brain,
Dark riddles, which, to honest minds unwarped, Were easy to explain—

Or, with keen salutary knife, to carve For hire the shrinking limb ; or else to feign
Wise words and healing powers, though knowing naught In face of death and pain—

Or grub all day for pelf 'mid hides and oils,
Like a mole in some dark alley, to rise at last,
After dull years, to wealth and ease, when all The use for them is past—

Or else to range myself with those who seek
By reckless throws with chance, by trick and cheat,
Swift riches lacking all the zest of toil, And only bitter-sweet.

Or worst, and still for hire, to feign to hear
A voice which called not, calling me to tell
Now of an indolent heaven, and now, obscene Threats of a bodily hell.

* * * * *
Then left I all, and ate the husks of sense ; Oh, passionate coral lips ! oh, shameful fair ! Bright eyes, and careless smiles, and reckless mirth ! Oh, golden rippling hair !

Oh, rose-strewn feasts, made glad with
 wine and song

And laughter-lit ! oh, whirling dances
 sweet,

When the mad music faints awhile and
 leaves

 Low beats of rhythmic feet !

Oh, glorious terrible moments, when
 the sheen

Of silk, and straining limbs flash
 thundering by,

And name and fame and honour itself,
 await

 Worse hazard than the die !

All these were mine. Then, thought I,
 I have found

The truth at last ; here comes not doubt
 to pain ;

Here things are what they seem, not
 sigments, born
 Of a too busy brain.

But soon, the broken law avenged
 itself ;

For, oh, the pity of it ! to feel the fire
 Grow colder daily, and the soaring
 soul

 Sunk deep in grosser mire.

And oh, the pity of it ! to drag down
 lives

Which had been happy else, to ruin,
 and waste

The precious affluence of love, which
 else

 Some humble home had graced.

And oh ! the weariness of feasts and
 wine :

The jests where mirth was not, the
 nerves unstrung,

The throbbing brain, the tasteless joys,
 which keep
 Their savour for the young.

These came upon me, and a vague un-
 rest,

And then a gnawing pain ; and then I
 fled,

As one some great destruction passes,
 flees

 A city of the dead.

* * * * *

Then, pierced by some vague sense of
 guilt and pain,
“God help me !” I said. “There is
 no help in life,

Only continual passions waging war,
 Cold doubt and endless strife !”

But He is full of peace, and truth, and
 rest,

I give myself to Him ; I yearn to
 find

What words divine have fallen from age
 to age

 Fresh from the Eternal mind.

And so, upon the reverend page I
 dwelt,

Which shows Him formless, self-con-
 tained, all-wise,

Passionless, pure, the soul of visible
 things,

Unseen by mortal eyes ;

Who oft across dim gulfs of time re-
 vealed,

Grew manifest, then passed and left a
 soul

Thick mist of secular error to ob-
 scure

 The upward gazing soul ;

And that which told of Opposite
Principles,
Of Light with Darkness warring ever-
more ;
Ah me ! 'twas nothing new, I had felt
the fight
Within my soul before.

And those wise Answers of the far-off
- sage,
So wise, they shut out God, and can
enchain
To-day in narrow bonds of foolishness
The subtle Eastern brain.

And last, the hallowed pages dear to
all,
Which bring God down to earth, a
King to fight
With His people's hosts ; or speaking
awful words
From out the blaze of light,--

Which tell how earthly chiefs who
loved the right,
Were dear to Him ; and how the poet
king
Sang, from his full repentant heart, the
strains
Sad hearts still love to sing.

And how the seer was filled with words
of fire,
And passionate scorn and lofty hate of
Ill,
So pure, that we who hear them seem
to bear
God speaking to us still,

But mixed with these, dark tales of
fraud and blood,
Like weeds in some fair garden ; till I
said,

"These are not His ; how shall a man
discern
The living from the dead ?

"I will go to that fair Life, the flower
of lives ;
I will prove the infinite pity and love
which shine
From each recorded word of Him who
once
Was human, yet Divine.

"Oh, pure sweet life, crowned by a
godlike death ;
Oh, tender healing hand ; oh, words that
give
Rest to the weary, solace to the sad,
And bid the hopeless live !

"Oh, pity, spurning not the penitent
thief ;
Oh, wisdom, stooping to the little
child ;
Oh, infinite purity, taking thought for
lives
By sinful stains defiled !

"With thee, will I dwell, with thee."
But as I mused,
Those pale ascetic words renewed my
doubt :
The cheek, which to the smiter should
be turned,
The offending eye plucked out.

The sweet impossible counsels which
may seem
Too perfect for our need ; nor recogn-
nise
A duty to the world, not all reserved
For that beyond the skies.

"And was it truth, or some too reverent dream
 Which scorned God's precious processes of birth,
 And spurned aside for Him, the changeless laws
 Which rule all things of earth ?

"Or how shall some strange breach of natural law
 Be proof of moral truth ; yet how deny That He who holds the cords of life and death
 Can raise up those who die ?

"Yet how to doubt that God may be revealed ;
 Is He more strange, incarnate, shedding tears,
 Than when the unaided scheme fulfils itself
 Through countless painful years ?

"But if revealed He be, how to escape The critic who dissects the sacred page, Till God's gift hangs on grammar, and the saint
 Is weaker than the sage !"

These warring thoughts held me, and more ; but when The simple life divine shone forth no more, And the fair truth came veiled in stately robes Of philosophic lore ;

And 'twas the apostle spoke, and not the Christ ; The scholar, not the Master ; and the Church Defined itself, and sank to earthly thrones : "Surely," I said, "my search

"Is vain ;" and when with magical rite and spell They killed the Lord, and sought with narrow creed, Half-fancy, half of barbarous logic born, To heal the hearts that bleed ;

And heretic strove with heretic, and the Church Slew for the truth itself had made : again, "Can these things be of Him ?" I thought, and felt The old undying pain.

And yet the fierce false prophet turned to God The gross idolatrous East ; and far away, Beyond the horrible wastes, the Jewd knave makes A Paradise to-day.

* * * * *
 Yet deep within my being still I kept Two sacred fires alight through all the strife,— Faith in a living God ; faith in a soul Dowered with an endless life.

And therefore though the world's foundations shook, I was not all unhappy ; knowing well That He whose hand sustained me would not bear To leave my soul in hell.

But now I looked on nature with strange eyes, For something whispered, "Surely all things pass ; All life decays on earth or air or sea,— All wither like the grass."

"These are, then have been, we ourselves decline,
And cease and turn to earth, and are as they :
Shall our dear animals rise ; shall the dead flowers
Bloom in another May ?

"The seed springs like the herb, but not the same ;
And like us, not the same, our children rise ;
The type survives, though suffering gradual change,
The individual dies.

"How shall one seek to sever, e'en in thought,
Body and soul ; how show to doubting eyes
That this returns to dust, while the other soars
Deathless beyond the skies ?

"And if it be a lovely dream—no more,
And life is ended with our latest breath,
May not the same sweet fancy have devised
The Lord of life and death ?

"We know Him not at all, nor may conceive
Beginning or yet ending. Is it more To image an Eternal World, than one Where nothing was before ?

"Whence came the Maker ? Was He uncreate ?
Then why must all things else created be ?
Was He created ? Then, the Lord I serve,
Lie farther off than He.

"Or if He be indeed, yet the soul dies, Why, what is He to us ? not here, not here ! His judgments fall, wrong triumphs here—right sinks ; What hope have we, or fear ?"

I could not answer, yet when others came,
Affirming He was not, and bade me live
In the present only, seizing unconcerned What pleasures life could give,

My doubt grown fiercer, scoffed at them, "Oh fools,
And blind, your joys I know ; the universe Confutes you ; can you see right yield to might,
The better to the worse,—

"Nor burn to adjust them ? If it were a dream,
Would all men dream it ? Can your thought conceive
The end you tell of better than the life,
Which all men else believe ?

"Or if we shrink as from a hateful voice,
From mute analogies of frame and shape,
Surely no other than a breath Divine Gave reason to the ape."

"What made all men to call on God ? what taught
The soaring soul its lofty heavenward flight ?
What led us to discern the strait bounds set,
To sever wrong from right ?

THE WANDERER.

"Be sure, no easier is it to declare
He is not than He is :" and I who
sought
Firm ground, saw here the same too
credulous faith
And impotence of thought.

And when they brought me their fan-
tastic creed,
With a figment for a god—mock cere-
monies—
Man worshipping himself —mock priests
to kill
The soul's high liberties, --

I spurned the folly with a curse, and
turned
To dwell with my own soul apart, and
there
Found no companion but the old doubt
grown
To an immense despair.

* * * * *
Then, as a man who, on a sunny day,
Feeling some trivial ache, unknown be-
fore,
Goes careless from his happy home,
and seeks
A wise physician's door.

And when he comes forth, neither
heeds nor sees
The joyous tide of life or smiling sky,
But always, always hears a ceaseless
voice
Repeating "Thou shalt die."

So all the world flowed by, and all my
days
Passed like an empty vision, and I said,
"There is no help in life ; seeming to
live,
We are but as the dead."

And thus, I tossed about long time ;
at last
Nature rebelled beneath the constant
pain,
And the dull sleepless care forgot itself,
In frenzy of the brain.

And sometimes all was blackness, un-
relieved,
And sometimes I would wander day
and night,
Through fiery long arcades, which
seared my brain
With flakes of blinding light.

And then I lay unmoved in a gray
calm ;
Not life nor death, and the past came
to seem
Thought, act, faith, doubt, things of
but lie worth
A dream within a dream.

* * * * *
But, when I saw my country like a
cloud,
Sink in the East, and the free ocean-
wind
Fanned life's returning flame and
roused again
Slow pulse and languid mind ;

Soon the great rush and mystery of the
sea,
The grisly depths, the great waves
surging on,
Dark with white spuming crests which
threaten death,
Swoop by, and so are gone.

And the strong sense of weakness, as
we sped—
Tossed high, plunged low, through
many a furious night,

And slept in faith, that some poor
seaman woke
To guide our course aright.

All lightened something of my load,
and seemed
To solace me a little, for they taught,
That the impalpable unknown might
stretch,
Even to the realms of thought.

And so I wandered into many lands,
And over many seas ; I felt the chill
Which in mid-ocean strikes on those
who near
The spire-crowned icy hill,

And threaded fairy straits beneath the
palms,
Where, year by year, the tepid waters
sleep ;
And where, round coral isles, the
sudden sea
Sinks its unfathomed deep.

Upon the savage feverish swamp, I trod
The desert sands, the fat low plains of
the East ;
On glorious storied shores and those
where man
Was ever as the beast.

And, day by day, I felt my frozen soul,
Soothed by the healing influence of
change,
Grow softer, registering day by day,
Things new, unknown, and
strange.

Not therefore, holding what it spurned
before,
Nor solving riddles, which before per-
plexed :

But with new springs of sympathy, no
more
By impotent musings vexed.

* * * * *
And last of all I knew the lovely land
Which was most mighty, and is still
most fair :
Where world-wide rule and heaven-
ward faith have left
Their traces everywhere.

And as from province to province I
wandered on,
City or country, all was fair and sweet ;
The air, the fields, the vines, the dark-
eyed girls,
The dim arcaded street ;

The minsters lit for vespers, in the cool ;
Gay bridals, solemn burials, soaring
chant,
Spent in high naves, gray cross, and
wayside shrine,
And kneeling suppliant ;

And painting, strong to aid the eye of
faith,
And sculpture, figuring awful destinies :
Thin campaniles, crowning lake-lit hills,
And sea-worn palaces.

Then, as the sweet days passed me one
by one,
New tides of life through body and
soul were sent ;
And daily sights of beauty worked a
calm
Ineffable content.

And soon, as in the spring, ere fronts
are done,
Deep down in earth the black roots
quicken and start,

THE WANDERER.

I seemed to feel a spring of faith and
love

Stir through my frozen heart.

* * * * *
Till one still summer eve, when as I
mused

By a fair lake, from many a silvery bell,
Thrilled from tall towers, I heard the
Angelus,

Deep peace upon me fell.

And following distant organ-swells, I
passed

Within the circuit of a lofty wall,
And thence within dim aisles, wherein
I heard

The low chant rise and fall.

And dark forms knelt upon the ground,
and all

Was gloom, save where some dying
day-beam shone,

High in the roof, or where the votive
lamp

Burned ever dimly on.

Then whether some chance sound or
solemn word

Across my soul a precious influence cast,
Or whether the fair presence of a faith
Born of so great a Past,

Smote me! the wintry glooms were
past and done,

And once again the Spring-time, and
once more

Faith from its root bloomed heaven-
ward—and I sank
Weeping upon the floor.

* * * * *
Long time within that peaceful home
I dwelt

With those grave brethren, spending
silent days

And watchful nights, in solemn reverent
thought,
Made glad by frequent praise.

And the awakened longing for the
Truth,

With the great dread of what had been
before,

The ordered life, the nearer view of
heaven,

Worked on me more and more.

So that, I lived their life of prayer and
praise,

Alike in summer heats and wintry
snows,

Pacing chill cloisters 'neath the waning
stars,

Long ere the slow sun rose.

And speaking little, and bringing down
my soul

With frequent fast and vigil, saw at
length

Truth's face show daily clearer and
more clear

To failing bodily strength.

For living in a mystical air, and
parched

With thirst for faith and truth; at last
I brought

The old too-active logic to enforce
The current of my thought.

And wishing to believe, I took for
true

The shameless subtleties which dare to
tell

How the Eternal charged one hand to
hold

The keys of heaven and hell.

"For if a faith be given, then must
there be
A Church to guard it, and a tongue to
speak,
And an unerring mind to rule alike
The strong souls and the weak."

"And, because God's high purpose
stands not still,
But He is ever with His own, the tide
Of miracle and dogma ceases not,
But flows down strong and wide,

"To the world's ending." So my
mind fell prone,
Before the Church ; and teachings new
and strange ;
The wafer, which to spirit and sense
sustains
Some dim incredible change—

The substance which tho' altered yet
retains
The self-same accidents ; the Virgin
Queen,
Immaculate in birth, and without death,
Soaring to worlds unseen—

The legends, sometimes foolish, oftentimes
fair,
Of saints who set all natural laws at
naught ;
The miracles, the portents, not the
charm,
Of the old Pagan thought—

These shook me not at all, who only
longed
To drain the healing draught of faith
again,
And dreaded, with a coward dread, the
thought
Of the old former pain.

The more incredible the tale, the more
The merit of belief ; the more I sought
To reason out the truth, I knew the
more
The impotence of thought.

And thus the swift months passed in
prayer and praise,
Bringing the day when those tall gates
should close,
And shut me out from thought and
life and all
Our heritage of woes.

* * * * *
Then, one day, when the end drew
very near,
Which should blot out the past for
ever, and I
Waited impatient, longing for the hour
When my old self should die ;

I knelt at noon, within the darkened
aisle,
Before a doll tawdry with rich bro-
cade,
And all ablaze with gems, the precious
gifts
Which pious hands had made :

Nor aught of strange I saw, so changed
was I,
In that dull fetish ; nay, heaven's gate
unsealed,
And the veiled angels bent before the
throne,
Where sat their Lord revealed.

While like a flood the ecstasy of faith
Surged high and higher, swift to fall at
last
Lower and lower, when the rapture
failed
And faded, and was past.

Lo, a sweet sunbeam, straying through
the gloom
Smote me, as when the first low shaft
of day
Aslant the night-clouds shoots, and
momently
Chases the mists away.

And that ideal heaven was closed, and
all
That reverend house turned to a dark-
ened room,
A den of magic, masking with close
fumes
The odours of the tomb.

* * * * *
Then passed I forth. Again my soul
was free ;
Again the summer sun and exquisite air
Made all things smile ; and life and joy
and love
Beamed on me everywhere.

And over all the earth there went a
stir,
A movement, a renewal. Round the
spring
In the broad village street, the dark-
eyed girls
Were fain to dance and sing

For the glad time. The children
played their play,
Like us who play at life ; light bursts
of song
Came from the fields, and to the village
church
A bridal passed along.

Far on the endless plain, the swift
steam drew
A soft white riband. Down the lazy
flow

Of the broad stream, I marked, round
sylvan bends,
The seaward barges go.

The brown vine-dresser, bent among
his vines,
Ceased sometimes from his toil to hold
on high
His laughing child, while his deep-
bosomed wife
Cheerful sat watching by.

And all the world was glad, and full
of life,
And I grew glad with it, and quickly
came
To see my past life as it was, and
feel
A salutary shame.

For what was it I had wished ? To set
aside
The perfect scheme of things, to live
apart
A sterile life, divorced from light and
love,
Sole, with an empty heart.

And wherefore to fatigue the Eternal
ear
With those incessant hymns of barren
praise ?
Does not a sweeter sound go up to
Him
From well-spent toilsome days,—

And natural life, refined by honest
love,
And sweet unselfish liturgies of home,
Heaven's will, borne onward by
obedient souls,
Careless of what may come ?

What need has He for praise? Forest
and field,
The winds, the seas, the plains, the
mountains, praise
Their Maker, with a grander litany
Than our poor voices raise.

What need has He of them? And
looking back
To those gray walls which late had
shown so fair,
I felt as one who from a dungeon
'scapes
To free un fettered air.

And half distrustful of myself, and full
Of terror of what might be, once more
fled,
With scarce a glance behind, as one
who flees
A city of the dead.

* * * * *
All through that day and night I jour-
neyed on
To the northward. With the dawn a
tender rose
Blushed in mid-heaven, and looking
up, I saw
Far off, the eternal snows.

Then all day higher, higher, from the
plain,
Beyond the tinkling folds, beyond the
'fair
Dense, self-sown chestnuts, then the
scented pines,
And then an eager air,

And then the ice-fields and the cloud-
less heavens;
And ever as I climbed, I seemed to cast
My former self behind, and all the rags
Of that unlovely past:

The doubts, the superstitions, the
regrets,
The awakening; as the soul which
hears the loud
Archangel summon, rising, casts be-
hind
Corruption and the shroud.

For I was come into a higher land,
And breathed a purer air than in the
past;
And He who brought me to the dust
of death
Had holpen me at last.

* * * * *
What then? A dream of sojourn 'mid
the hills,
A stir of homeward travel, swift and
brief,
Because the very hurry of the change
Brought somewhat of relief.

A dream of a fair city, the chosen
seat
Of all the pleasures, impotent to stay
The thirsty soul, whose water-springs
were laid
In dear lands far away.

A dream of the old crowds, the smoke,
the din
Of our dear mother, dearer far than
fair;
The home of losty souls and busy
brains,
Keener for that thick air.

Then a long interval of patient toil,
Building the gradual framework of my
art,
With eyes which cared no more to seek
the whole,
Fast fixed upon the part.

THE WANDERER.

<p>And mind, which shunned the general, absorbed In the particular only, till it saw What boundless possibilities lie for men 'Twixt matter and high law !</p> <p>How that which may be rules, not that which must ; And absolute truth revealed, would serve to blind The soul's bright eye, and sear with tongues of flame The sinews of the mind.</p> <p>How in the web of life, the thread of truth Is woven with error; yet a vesture fair Comes from the loom—a precious royal robe Fit for a god to wear.</p> <p>Till at the last, upon the crest of toil Sat Knowledge, and I gained a newer truth : Not the pale queen of old, but a soft maid, Filled with a tender ruth.</p> <p>And, ray by ray, the clear-faced unity Orbed itself forth, and lo ! the noble throne Of patient souls, who sought the truth in act, And grew, through silence, strong.</p> <p>Till prizing union more than dissidence, And holding dear the race, I came to prove A spring of sympathy within, which swelled To a deep stream of love.</p>	<p>And Knowledge gave me gold, and power, and fame, And honour ; and Love, a clearer, surer view : Thus in calm depths I moored my weary soul Fast anchored to the True.</p> <p>And now the past lies far away, and I Can scarce recall those vanished days again ; No more the old faith stirs me, and no more Comes the old barren pain.</p> <p>For now each day brings its appointed toil, And every hour its grateful sum of care ; And life grows sweeter, and the gracious world Shows day by day more fair.</p> <p>For now I live a two-fold life ; my own And yet another's ; and another heart Which beats to mine, makes glad the lonely world Where once I lived apart.</p> <p>And little lives are mine to keep un- stained, Strange mystic growths, which day by day expand, Like the flowers they are, and set me in a fair Perpetual wonderland.</p> <p>New senses, gradual language, dawning mind, And with each day that passes, traced more strong On those white tablets, awful characters That tell of right and wrong.</p>
---	---

And what hand wrote them ? One brief
life declined,
Went from us, and is not. Ah ! what
and where
Is that fair soul ? Surely it somewhere
blooms
In purer, brighter air.

What took it hence, and whither ? Can
I bear
To think, that I shall turn to a herb, a
tree,
A little earth or lime, nor care for these,
Whatever things may be ?

Or shall the love and pity I feel for
these
End here, nor find a higher type or
task ?
I am as God to them, bestowing more
Than they deserve or ask.

And shall I find no Father ? Shall my
being
Aspire in vain for ever, and always tend
To an impossible goal, which none
shall reach,—
An aim without an end ?

Or, shall I heed them when they bid
me take
No care for aught but what my brain
may prove ?
I, through whose inmost depths from
birth to death,
Strange heavenward currents
move ;

Vague whispers, inspirations, memories,
Sanctities, yearnings, secret question-
ings,
And oft amid the fullest blaze of noon,
The rush of hidden wings ?

Nay ; my soul spurns it ! Less it is to
know

Than to have faith : not theirs who cast
away

The mind God gave them, eager to adore
Idols of baser clay.

But theirs, who marking out the bounds
of mind,

And where thought rules, content to
understand,

Know that beyond its kingdom lies a
dread

Immeasurable land.

A land which is, though fainter than a
cloud,

Full of sweet hopes and awful destinies :
A dim land, rising when the eye is clear
Across the trackless seas.

* * *

O life ! O death ! O faithful wandering
soul !

O riddle of being, too hard to under-
stand !

These are Thy dreadful secrets, Lord ;
and we
The creatures of Thy hand.

O wells of consciousness, too deep for
thought,

These are Thy dwelling, awful Lord
Divine ;

Thine are we still, the creatures of Thy
hand,

Living and dying, Thine.

THE WEARY RIVER.

THERE is a ceaseless river,
Which flows down evermore
Into a wailing ocean,
A sea without a shore

Broken by laughing ripple,
Foaming with angry swell,
Sweet music as of heaven,
Deep thunder as of hell.

Gay fleets float down upon it,
And sad wrecks, full of pain :
But all alike it hurries
To that unchanging main.

Sometimes 'tis foul and troubled,
And sometimes clear and pure ;
But still the river flows, and still
The dull sea doth endure.

And thus 'twill flow for ever,
Till time shall cease to be :
O weary, weary river,
O bitter, barren sea.

TRUTH IN FALSEHOOD.

YOUR little hand in mine I rest :
The slender fingers, white and long,
Lie in my broad palm, rude and strong,
Like birdlings in their nest.

Yours, like yourself, so soft and white,
So delicately free from soil ;
Mine sunbrowned, hard with moil
and toil,
And seamed with scars of fight.

Dear love ! sometimes your innocence
Strikes me with sudden chills of fear ;
What if you saw before you, dear,
The secret gulfs of sense ?—

The coarseness, the deceit, the sin,
We know, who 'mid the sordid crowd
Must press, nor midst the tumult loud
Can hear the voice within ?

What if you saw me with the eyes
Of others,—nay, my own,—or heard
The unworthy tale, the biting word,
The sneer that worldlings prize ?

Or knew me as I am indeed,
No hero free from blot or stain,
But a poor soul who drags his chain
With halting feet that bleed,—

Who oft-time slips and falls, content,
Though bruised and weary, faint and worn,
He toils all night, if with the morn
When life and strength are spent,

He sees some far-off struggling ray,
Dispel the palpable obscure,
And on the eastern hills, the pure
White footprints of the day ?

But you, oh love, can never know
These darkling paths ; for you the light
Shines always changeless, always bright,
The self-same tempered glow.

And love with innocence combined
The nunnery of your heart shall guard,
And faith with eye unsailing ward
The jewel of your mind.

So be it : I would sooner be
Steeped to the lips in lie and cheat,
A very monster of deceit,
Than bare myself to thee.

Nay, rather would I dare to hear
At that great Day from lips of flame,
Blown to all souls my tale of shame,
Than whispered in thine ear.

Strange riddle, to those who never
knew

Of good with evil intertwined

The two-fold self, the links that bind

The false things to the true ;

But to the seeing eye more clear

Than blaze of noonday. So be sure

If such deceit might keep thee
pure,

I'd glory in it, dear.

TWO VOYAGES.

Two ships which meet upon the ocean
waste,

And stay a little while, and interchange
Tidings from two strange lands, which
lie beneath

Each its own heaven and particular
stars,

And fain would tarry ; but the im-
patient surge

Calls, and a cold wind from the setting
sun

Divides them, and they sadly drift apart,
And fade, and sink, and vanish, 'neath
the verge—

One to the breathless plains and
treacherous seas

Smitten by the tyrannous Sun, where
mind alone

Withers amid the bounteous outer-
world,

And prodigal Nature dwarfs and chains
the man—

{ One to cold rains, rude winds, and
hungry waves

{ Spilt on the frowning granite, niggard
sun.

And snows and mists which starve the
vine and palm,

But nourish to more glorious growth
the man.

One to the scentless flowers and song-
less birds,

Swift storms and poison stings and
ravelling jaws :

One to spring violets and nightingales,
Sleek-coated kine and honest gray-eyed
skies.

One to lie helpless on the stagnant sea,
Or sink in sleep beneath the hurricane :

One to speed on, white-winged, through
summer airs,

Or sow the rocks with ruin—who
shall tell ?

So with two souls which meet on life's
broad deep,

And cling together but may not stay ;
for Time

And Age and chills of Absence wear
the links

Which bind them, and they part for
evermore—

One to the tropic lands of fame and
gold,

And feverish thirst and weariness of
soul ;

One to long struggles and a wintry life,
Decked with one sweet white bloom of
happy love.

For each, one fate, to live and die
apart,

Save for some passing smile of kindred
souls ;

Then drift away alone, on opposite
tides,

To one dark harbour and invisible goal.

THE WISE RULE.

"TIME flies too fast, too fast our life decays."

Ah, faithless ! in the present lies our being ;
And not in lingering love for vanished days !

"Come, happy future, when my soul shall live."

Ah, fool ! thy life is now, and not again ;
The future holds not joy nor pain to give !

"Live for what is : future and past are naught."

Ah, blind ! a flash, and what shall be, has been.
Where, then, is that for which thou takest thought ?

Not in what has been, is, or is to be,
The wise soul lives, but in a wider time,
Which is not any, but contains the three !

THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING.

"CRY, cry aloud in the land, cry aloud in the streets of the city ;

Cry and proclaim that no more shall the blood of the people be shed.
Too long have the great ones waxed strong, without justice or any pity.

Too long have they ground down the poor, and eaten the people as bread."

Thus said the voice from the dead.

"Terrible voice, I said, immoderate, voice of unreason,
Not of themselves do the lowly ones mourn, or the great ones rejoice ;
He who hath made them unequal, hath made all things in their season ;

If they are mighty and strong, they were made without freedom or choice."

"Cry, cry aloud," said the voice.

"How shall the sins of the few be reckoned against the many ?
Are there no tender hearts and kind 'midst the selfish and proud ;
Merciful souls and pure, full of love for their suffering brothers ;
Pitiful, touched with compassion and care for the desolate crowd ?"
"Cry," said the voice, "cry aloud."

"Nay, but the world is ruled by merciless rules unbending ;
The feeble folk fade from the earth, and only the mighty remain ;
Not men alone, but all things send upwards a clamour unending ;
Always the whole creation travails in sorrow and pain."

"Cry, 'said the voice, "cry again."

"Are not our sins and our fathers' worked out in our children's sorrow ?

Does not excess of laughter sink at its close in a sigh ?

Mirth and enjoyment to-day turn to pain and repentance to-morrow ;
Thousands are born every hour, in the place of the thousands who die."

"Cry," said the stubborn voice, "cry."

"Lo! He hath made all things ; good
and evil, sorrow and pleasure ;
Not as your ways are His ways, yet are
ye not all in His hand ?
Just is He, though ye know not the
measure wherewith He will
measure ;
Dark things shall one day be clear ;
to obey is to understand !"
Thus that voice, solemn and grand.

If in thy heart thou bearest seeds of
hell,
Though all men smile, yet what shall
be thy gain ?
Though all men frown, if truth and
right remain,
Take thou no thought for aught ; for it
is well.

Take thou no thought for aught ; nor
deem it shame
To lag behind while knaves and dullards
rise ;
Thy soul asks higher guerdon, purer
fame,
Than to loom large and grand in vulgar
eyes.
Though thou shouldst live thy life in
vile estate,
Silent, yet knowing that deep within
thy breast
Unkindled sparks of genius lie re-
pressed,—
Greater is he who is, than seemeth,
great.

O THRUSH, your song is passing sweet,
But never a song that you have sung
Is half so sweet as thrushes sang
When my dear love and I were young.

O Roses, you are sweet and red,
Yet not so red nor sweet as were
The roses that my mistress loved
To bind within her flowing hair.

Time filches fragrance from the flower ;
Time steals the sweetness from the
song ;
Love only scorns the tyrant's power,
And with the growing years grows
strong.

If thou shouldst spend long years of
hope deferred,
Chilled through with doubt, and sicken-
ing to despair ;
If as cares thicken friends grow cold
and rare,
Nor favouring voice in all the throng
be heard ;
If all men praise him whom thou
know'st to be
Of lower aims and duller brain than
thine,—
Take thou no thought, though all men
else combine
In thy despite : their praise is naught
to thee.

THE TRUE MAN.

TAKE thou no thought for aught save
right and truth,
Life holds for finer souls no equal prize ;
Honours and wealth are baubles to the
wise,
And pleasure flies on swifter wing than
youth.

PASSING.

Bethink thee of the irony of fate,
How great men die inglorious and
alone ;
How Dives sits within upon his throne,
While good men crouch with Lazarus
at the gate.

Our tree of life set on Time's hither
shore

Blooms like the secular aloe once an
age :

The great names scattered on the
historic page

Are few indeed, but the unknown are

Waste is the rule of life : the gay
flowers spring,

The fat fruits drop, upon the untrodden
plain ;

Sea-sands at ebb are silvered o'er with
pain ;

The fierce rain beats and mars the
feeble wing ;

Fair forms grow fairer still for deep
disease ;

Hearts made to bless are spent apart,
alone.

What claim hast thou to joy, while
others moan ?

God made us all, and art thou more
than these ?

Take thou no care for aught save truth
and right ;

Content, if such thy fate, to die obscure ;
Wealth palls and honours, Fame may
not endure,

And loftier souls soon weary of delight.
Keep innocence ; be all a true man

ought ;

Let neither pleasure tempt, nor pains
appal ;

Who hath this, he hath all things,
having naught ;
Who hath it not, hath nothing, having
all.

PASSING.

To spring, to bloom, to fade,—
This is the sum of the laborious years ;
Life preludes death as laughter ends in
tears :

All things that God has made
Suffer perpetual change, and may not
long endure.

We alter day by day ;
Each little moment, as life's current
rolls,

Stamps some faint impress on our
yielding souls ;

We may not rest nor stay,
Drifting on tides unseen to one dread
goal and sure.

Our being is compassed round
With miracles ; on this our life-long
sleep,

Strange whispers rise from the sur-
rounding deep,

Like that weird ocean sound
Borne in still summer nights on weary
watching ears.

The selves we leave behind
Affright us like the ghosts of friends
long dead ;

The old love vanished in the present
dread,

They visit us to find
New sorrows, alien hopes, strange
pleasures, other fears.

FETTERS.

Oft who shall say that we are free !
Surely life's chains are strong to bind
From youth to age, from birth to death,
Body and mind.

We run the riotous race of youth,
Then turn from evil things to good :
'Tis but a slower pulse, a chill
Of youth's hot blood.

We mount the difficult steeps of thought,
Or pace the dusty paths of gain :
'Tis but that sense receding leaves
A keener brain.

Time takes this too, and then we turn
Our dim eyes to the hidden shore ;
Life palls, and yet we long to live,—
Ay, nothing more.

RICH AND WISE.

WILD flowers in spring were sweet to
childish hands
As riches to the wretch possessing
naught ;

And as the water-springs in desert
lands
Are the pale victories of patient
thought:
But sweeter, dearest, sweeter far,
The hours when we together are.

No more I know the childish joys of
old,
Nor yet have learnt the grave delights
of age :
A miser, gloat I on thy locks' rich
gold ;
A student, ponder on thy soul's fair
page.
Thus do I grow both rich and wise,
On these fair locks and those deep
eyes.

Therefore in wit and wealth do I in-
crease,
Poring on thee, as on a fair writ
book ;
No panic-fear can make that rich stream
cease,
Nor doubt confuse the crystal of thy
look.
Some to the mart, some to the oratory,
May turn them : thou art both to me.

LOVE IN DEATH.

DEAR heart ! what a little time it is since Francis and I used to walk
From church in the still June evenings together, busy with loving talk ;
And now he is gone, far away over seas, to some strange foreign country,—and I
Shall never rise from my bed any more, till the day when I come to die.

I tried not to think of him during the prayers; but when his dear voice I heard,
I failed to take part in the hymn ; for my heart fluttered up to my throat like a
bird,

And scarcely a word of the sermon I caught. I doubt 'twas a grievous sin ;
But 'twas only one poor little hour in the week that I had to be happy in.

When the blessing was given, and we left the dim aisles for the light of the evening star ;
 Though I durst not lift up my eyes from the ground, yet I knew that he was not far.
 And I hurried on, though I fain would have stayed, till I heard his footstep draw near ;
 And love rising up in my breast like a flame, cast out every shadow of fear.

Ah me ! 'twas a pleasant pathway home,—a pleasant pathway and sweet ;
 Ankle deep through the purple clover ; breast high 'mid the blossoming wheat ;
 I can hear the landrails prate through the dew, and the night-jars' tremulous thrill,
 And the nightingale pouring her passionate song from the hawthorn under the hill.

One day, when we came to the wicket gate, 'neath the elms, where we used to part,
 His voice began to falter and break as he told me I had his heart.
 And I whispered back that mine was his : we knew what we felt long ago ;
 Six weeks are as long as a lifetime almost, when you love each other so.

So we put up the banns, and were man and wife, in the sweet fading time of the year,
 And till Christmas was over and past, I knew no shadow of sorrow or fear.
 It seems like a dream already, alas ! a sweet dream vanished and gone,
 So hurried and brief while passing away, so long to look back upon.

I had only had him three little months, and the world lay frozen and dead,
 When the summons came, which we feared and hoped, and he sailed over seas
 for our bread.

Ah, well ! it is fine to be wealthy and grand, and never to need to part ;
 But 'tis better far to love and be poor than be rich with an empty heart.

Though I thought 'twould have killed me to lose him at first, yet was he not going for me ?

So I hid deep down in my breast all the grief, which I knew it would pain him to see.

He'd surely be back by the autumn, he said ; and since his last passionate kiss
 He has scarcely been out of my thoughts, day or night, for a moment, from that day to this.

When I wrote to him how I thought it would be, and he answered so full of love,

Ah ! there was not an angel happier than I, in all the white chorus above.

And I seemed to be lonely no longer, the days and the weeks passed so swiftly away;
And the March winds died, and the sweet April showers gave place to the blossoms of May.

And then came the sad summer eve, when I sat with the little frock in the sun,
And Patience ran in with the news of the ship—Ah, well! may His will be done.
They said that all hands were lost, and I swooned away on the floor like a stone;
And another life came, ere I knew he was safe, and my own was over and gone.

* * * * *

And now I lie helpless here, and shall never rise up again;
I grow weaker and weaker, day by day, till my weakness itself is a pain.
Every morning the slow dawn creeps; every evening I see from my bed
The orange-gold fade into lifeless gray, and the old evening star overhead.

Sometimes by the twilight dim, or the awful birth of the day,
As I lie, very still, not asleep nor awake, my soul seems to flutter away;
And I float far beyond the stars, till I thrill with a rapturous pain,
And the feeble touch of a tiny hand recalls me to life again.

And the doctor says she will live. Ah! 'tis hard to leave her alone,
And to think she will never know, in the world, the love of the mother who's gone.
They will tell her of me, by-and-by, and perhaps she will shed me a tear;
But if I should stoop to her bed in the night, she would start with a horrible fear.

She will grow into girlhood, I trust, and will bask in the light of love,
And I, if I gain to see her at all, shall only look on from above.
I shall see her and cannot aid, though she fall into evil and woe.
Ah, how can the angels find heart to rejoice, when they think of their dear ones below?

And Francis, he too will forget me, and go on the journey of life;
And I hope, though I dare not think of it yet, will take him another wife—
It will hardly be Patience, I think, though she liked him in days gone by.
Was that why she came? But what thoughts are these for one who is soon to die?

I hope he will come ere I go, though I feel no longer the thirst
For the sound of his voice and the light of his eye, which I used to feel at first.

'Tis not that I care for him less, but death dries, with a finger of fire,
The tender springs of innocent love and the torrents of strong desire.

And I know we shall meet again. I have done many things that are wrong,
But surely the Lord of Life and of Love cannot bear to be angry long.
I am only a girl of eighteen, and have had no teacher but love ;
And, it may be, the sorrow and pain I have known will be counted for me
above.

For I doubt if the minister knows all the depths of the goodness of God,
When he says, He is jealous of earthly love, and bids me bow down 'neath the
rod.

He is learned and wise, I know, but somehow to dying eyes
God opens the secret doors of the shrine that are closed to the learned and wise.

So now I am ready to go, for I know He will do what is best,
Though He call me away while the sun is on high, like a child sent early to rest.
I should like him to see her first, though the yearning is over and past :
But what is that footstep upon the stair ? Oh, my darling at last, at last !

DEAR LITTLE HAND.

DEAR little hand that clasps my own,
Embrownéd with toil and seamed
with strife ;
Pink little fingers not yet grown
To the poor strength of after-life,—
Dear little hand !

Dear little eyes which smile on mine
With the first peep of morning light ;
Now April-wet with tears, or fine
With dews of pity, or laughing
bright.
Dear little eyes !

Dear little voice, whose broken speech
All eloquent utterance can transcend ;
Sweet childish wisdom strong to reach
A holier deep than love or friend :
Dear little voice !

Dear little life ! my care to keep
From every spot and stain of sin ;
Sweet soul foredoomed, for joy or pain,
To struggle and—which ? to fail or
win ?
Dread mystical life !

STILL WATERS.

A CRUEL little stream I know,
Which slowly, slowly crawls between
The ooze banks, fringed with sedges
green,
That serve to bind its feeble flow.

So sheltered that no passing breath
Of west-wind stirs it ; nay, the blast
Which strips the tall elms and is
past,
Scarce wakes to life its face of death.

On its black surface year by year
 The marsh flowers, grown untimely old,
 Shed their soft petals like a tear,
 And hopeless drown their faded gold.

Deep in its darkling depths the pike
 Darts with his cruel jaws ; by night
 The black eels, sinuous, serpent-like,
 Twist like fell ghosts that fear the light.

Spring shuns it, summer loves it not ;
 The low fat fields are lit with bloom,
 But here the watery sedges rot,
 And all the months are clothed with gloom.

Autumn's first footstep sears to brown
 Its coarse green fringe ; the first cold breath,
 Ere yet the oak-leaf flutters down,
 Binds its dull life in icy death.

I hate, I hate you, crawling stream !
 Dumb, creeping, murderous wretch,
 I long
 To see the sunlit ripples gleam,
 To hear the torrent's jubilant song.

But you, dull monster, all the years
 Lie, rolling on your sullen flood,
 And take your fill of mortal tears ;
 Yet, like the Churchmen, spill not blood.

The dark gap in the ice, the boat
 Keel upward, or the drifting oar ;
 Or, like of old, the little coat,
 The white clothes heaped upon the shore ;

And some young life is over and gone,
 And some fond heart is broken in twain ;
 And you flow smoothly, smoothly on,
 Taking no heed for death or pain.

They come and grapple with hooks until
 They reach the slimy deep, where lies
 The white thing, very cold and still,
 With death's gaze in its stony eyes.

And you just make a ripple, and then
 Flow smoothly onward : you who slew

Young innocent lives of painted men,
 Long ere the crowded city grew ;

And shall in far years yet to be,
 Pierce unborn mothers with that sharp pain,

Which only a mother feels when he
 Who was her first-born comes again,

A clay-cold heap. I would that I
 Had but the archangel's flaming brand ;

So would I burn thy dull springs dry,
 And choke thy flow with hills of sand.

Yet why ? Whatever soft souls prate,
 Babbling of universal good,
 Love is the sister-child of hate,
 And all good things are bought with blood.

*
 Virtue were not if vice were not,
 Nor darkness if there were not light.
 Creep on ; fulfil thy murderous lot ;
 For Wrong has equal life with Right.

IN REGENT STREET.

ONE of the nightly hundreds who
pass
Wearily, hopelessly, under the gas.

But the old sad words had a strange
new tone,
And the wild laugh seemed to sink to
a moan.

So that turning as one constrained to
look,
The strange sight stifled the voice of
rebuke :

For I looked on a girl's face pure and
fair,
Blue-eyed, and crowned with a glory
of hair,

Such as my dead child-sister might
own,
Were she not a child still, but a
woman grown ;

Full of the tender graces that come
To the cherished light of an ancient
home ;

Even to that touch of a high disdain,
Which is born of a name without blot
or stain.

Strange ; as if one should chance to
meet
An angel of light in that sordid street !

"O child, what misery brings you
here,
To this place of vileness and weeping
and fear ?"

"I am no more than the rest," she
said,
Proudly averting her beautiful head !

Then no response, till some kinder
word
Stole in unawares, and her heart was
stirred.

"I was a wife but the other day,
Now I am left without hope or stay !

"Work did I ask ? What work is for
you ?
What work can those delicate fingers
do ?

"Service ? But how could I bear to
part
From the child with whom I had left
my heart ?

"Alms ?—Yes, at first ; then a pitiless
No :
The State would provide me whither
to go.

"But in sordid prisons it laid my head
With the thief and the harlot ; there-
fore I fled.

"One thing alone had I left untried,
Then I put off the last rag of pride."

"What came ? You were of an hon-
oured race,
Now you must live with your own
disgrace.'

"But many will buy where few will
give,
And I die every day that my child-may
live."

Motherly love sunk to this ! Ah, well,
Teach they not how He went down into
hell :

Only blind me in heart and brain,
Or ever I look on the like again.

FROM THE DESERT:

THOU hast visited me with Thy storms,
And the vials of Thy sore displeasure
Thou hast poured on my head, like a
bitter draught

Poured forth without stint or measure ;
Thou hast bruised me as flax is bruised ;
Made me clay in the potter's wheel ;
Thou hast hardened Thy face like steel,
'And cast down my soul to the ground ;
Burnt my life in the furnace of fire,
like dross,
And left me in prison where souls are
bound :
Yet my gain is more than my loss.

What if Thou hadst led my soul
To the pastures where dull souls feed ;
And set my steps in smooth paths, far
away

From the feet of those that bleed ;
Penned me in low, fat plains,
Where the air is as still as death,
And Thy great winds are sunk to a
breath,
And Thy torrents a crawling stream,
And the thick steam of wealth goes up
day and night,
Till Thy sun gives a veiled light,
And heaven shows like a vanished
dream !

What if Thou hadst set my feet
With the rich in a gilded room ;

And made me to sit where the scorner
sat,
Scoffing at death and doom !
What if I had hardened my heart
With dark counsels line upon line ;
And blunted my soul with meat and
wine,
Till my ears had grown deaf to the
bitter cry
Of the halt and the weak and the
impotent ;
Nor hearkened, lapt in a dull content,
To the groanings of those who die !

My being had waxed dull and dead
With the lusts of a gross desire ;
But now Thou hast purged me thoroughly,
and burnt
My shame with a living fire.
So burn me, and purge my will
Till no vestige of self remain,
And I stand out white without spot or
stain.

Then let Thy flaming angel at last
Smite from me all that has been before ;
And sink me, freed from the load of
the past,
In Thy dark depths evermore.

DUMB.

ALL men are poets if they might but
tell
The dim ineffable changes which the
sight
Of natural beauty works on them : the
charm
Of those first days of Spring, when life
revives
And all the world is bloom : the white-
fringed green
Of summer seas swirling around the base

Of overhanging cliffs ; the golden gleam	The loneliness of soul, which truth too oft
Seen from some breezy hill, where far and wide	Gives to reward the faith which casts aside
The fields grow ripe for harvest ; or the storm	All things for her ; or saintly lives obscure,
Smiting the leaden surf, or echoing On nightly lakes and unsuspected hills, Revealed in lurid light ; or first per- ceived,	Spent in a sweet compassion, till they gain,
High in mid-heaven, above the rosy clouds,	Living, some glow of heaven ; or pas- sionate love,
The everlasting snows.	Bathing our poor world in a mystic light,
And Art can move, To higher minds, an influence as great As Nature's self ; when the rapt gazer marks	Seen once, then lost for ever. These can stir
The stainless mother folding arms divine	Life to its depths, till silence grows a load
Around the Eternal Child, or pitying love	Too hard to bear, and the rapt soul would faint
Nailed to the dreadful cross, or the white strength	Speak with strange tongues which startle as they come,
Of happy heathen gods, or serpent coils	Like the old saints who spake at Pentecost.
Binding the agonized limbs, till from their pain	But we are dumb, we are dumb, and may not tell
Is born a thing of beauty for all time.	What stirs within us, though the soul may throb
And more than Nature, more than Art can move	And tremble with its passion, though the heart
The awakened soul—heroic soaring deeds ;	Dissolve in weeping : dumb. Nature may spread
When the young champion falls in hopeless fight,	Sublimest sights of beauty ; Art in- spire
Striking for home ; or when, by truth constrained,	High thoughts and pure of God-like sacrifice ;
The martyr goes forth cheerful to his fate—	Yet no word comes. Heroic daring deeds
The dungeon, or the torture, or, more hard,	Thrill us, yet no word comes ; we are dumb, we are dumb,
The averted gaze of friends; the loss of love,	Save that from finer souls at times may rise,
	Once in an age, faint inarticulate sounds,

Low halting tones of wonder, such as
come .
From children looking on the stars, but
still
With power to open to the listening
ear
The Fair Divine Unknown, and to
unseal
Heaven's inner gates before us ever-
more.

Ah, few and far between ! The earth
grows green,
Art's glorious message speaks from year
to year,
Great deeds and high are done from
day to day,
But the voice comes not which has
power to wake
The sleeping soul within, and animate
The beauty which informs them, lend-
ing speech
To what before was dumb. They
come, they go,
Those sweet impressions spent on sepa-
rate souls,
Like raindrops on the endless ocean-
plains,
Lost as they fall. The world rolls on ;
lives spring,
Blossom, and fade ; the play of life is
played
More vivid than of old—a wider stage,
With more consummate actors ; yet
the dull,
Cold deeps of sullen silence swallow up
The strain, and it is lost. But if we
might
Paint all things as they are, find voice
to speak
The thoughts now mute within us, let
the soul
Trace on its sensitive surface vividly,

As does the sun our features, all the
play
Of passion, all the changeful tides of
thought,
The mystery, the beauty, the delight,
The fear, the horror, of our lives,—our
being
Would blaze up heavenward in a sud-
den flame,
Spend itself, and be lost.
Wherefore 'tis well
This narrow boundary that hedges in
The strong and weak alike. Thought
could not live,
Nor speech, in that pure æther which
girds round
Life's central dwelling-place. Only
the dull
And grosser atmosphere of earth it is
Which vibrates to the sweet birds' song,
and brings
Heaven to the wondering ear. Only
the stress,
The pain, the hope, the longing, the
constraint
Of limited faculties circling round and
round
The grim circumference, and finding
naught
Of outlet to the dread unknown be-
yond,
Can lend the poet voice. Only the
weight,
The dulness of our senses, which makes
dumb
And hushes half the finer utterance,
Makes possible the song, and modulates
The too exalted music, that it falls
So soft upon the listening soul, that
life,
Not withered by the awful harmony,
Nor drunk with too much sweetness,
nor struck blind

By the too vivid presence of the Unknown,
Fulfils its round of duty—elevated,
Not slain by too much splendour—
comforted,
Not thunder-smitten—soothed, not laid
asleep—
And ever, through the devious maze of
being,
Fares in slow narrowing cycles to the
end.

FAITH WITHOUT SIGHT.

No angel comes to us to tell
Glad news of our beloved dead ;
Nor at the old familiar board,
They sit among us, breaking bread.

Three days we wait before the tomb,
Nay, life-long years ; and yet no
more,
For all our passionate tears, we find
The stone rolled backward from the
door.

Yet are they risen as He is risen ;
For no eternal loss we grieve.
Blessed are they who ask no sign,
And, never having seen, believe.

CAGED.

ALAS for fame ! I saw a genius sit,
Draining full bumpers with a trem-
bling hand,
And roll out rhapsodies of folly, lit
By soaring fancies hard to under-
stand.

Lonely he seemed, whom all men
should admire ;
And some were there who sneered a
covert sneer,
Quenching with logic cold the sacred
fire ;
And one who hardly checked a rising
tear

Because life's order binds with chains
of steel
The struggling individual soul ;
because
The fair fine flower of life doth oft
conceal
A hidden worm which always frets
and gnaws
The inner heart from which all perfumes
come,
And round the deep-set core of
golden fire
Foul creeping creatures make their
constant home—
Black hatred, wild revolt, and gross
desire.

What is this bar that Nature loves to
place
Before the too aspiring heart and
brain,—
Bringing down goodly hopes to deep
disgrace,
Keeping high pleasure balanced by
low pain,
Pure thoughts by secret failings, subtler
joys
With grosser sense or hopeless depths
of woe,—
Setting our lives in barren counter-
poise,
Which says, Thus far, no further
shalt thou go.

Is it that Nature, envious of her own,
Even as the fabled gods of primal
years,
Because to too great stature it is
grown,
Hates her consummate work, and
only fears
Lest the soul, once enfranchised, soar
too high,
Up to some Spiritual place of Souls,
Where the world's feeble echoes faint
and die,
And in fine waves a purer ether
rolls?

There is no infinite in Nature. All
Is finite, set within a self-made
bound.
Thought builds round space itself a
brazen wall,
And hates the barren cycle's endless
round.
Life grown too perfect is not life at all ;
Some hidden discords sweeten every
strain ;
No virtue is, where is no power to fall,
Nor true delight without a touch of
pain.

And this it is that limits evermore
The life of man to this its low estate,
And gives the soul's light pinions power
to soar
Only a little space toward heaven's
gate.
Creatures we are of the earth, and not
the sky,
Bound down, constrained, confined ;
and yet 'tis well :
No angel's wings are ours to mount on
high,
No chains have power to keep our
souls in hell.

And since to realms of thought we may
aspire,
Higher than these in which we
breathe and are,
And know within the same creative
fire
As that which lights and warms the
furthest star,
So should our restless spirits grow con-
tent
With what is theirs, not covet to be
free ;
Since boundless power is oft most im-
potent,
And narrow bonds the truest liberty.

TOO MUCH KNOWLEDGE.

OH, if we had but eyes to see
The glory which around us lies,
To read the secrets of the earth,
And know the splendours of the
skies ;

And if we had but ears to hear
The psalm of life which upward rolls
From desert tent and city street,
From every meeting-place of souls ;

And if we had but tongues to tell
The dumb thoughts that shall ne'er
be heard,
The inarticulate prayers which rise
From hearts by passionate yearnings
stirred,—

Our souls would parch, like Semele's,
When her dread Lord blazed forth
confessed.
Ah, sometimes too much knowledge
blights,
And ignorance indeed is blest !

ON A FLIGHT OF LADY-BIRDS.

OVER the summer sea,
 Floating on delicate wings,
 Comes an unnumbered host
 Of beautiful fragile things ;
 Whence they have come, or what
 Blind impulse has forced them
 here,
 What still voice marshalled them out
 Over wide seas without fear,
 You cannot tell, nor I.

But to-day the air is thick
 With these strangers from far
 away :
 On hot piers and drifting ships
 The weary travellers stay.
 On the sands where to-night they
 will drown,
 On the busy waterside street,
 Trampled in myriads down
 By the careless wayfarers' feet
 The beautiful creatures lie.

Who knows what myriads have sunk
 To drown in the oily waves,
 Till all our sea-side world shows
 Like a graveyard crowded with
 graves ?
 Humble creatures and small,
 How shall the Will which sway,
 This enormous unresting ball,
 Through endless cycles of days,
 Take thought for them or care ?

And yet, if the greatest of kings,
 With the wisest of sages com-
 bined,
 Never could both devise—
 Strong arm and inventive mind—

So wondrous a shining coat,
 Such delicate wings and free,
 As have these small creatures which
 float
 Over the breathless sea
 On this summer morning so fair.
 * * * * *
 And the life, the wonderful life,
 Which not all the wisdom of earth
 Can give to the humblest creature
 that moves
 The mystical process of birth—
 The nameless principle which doth
 lurk
 Far away beyond atom, or monad,
 or cell,
 And is truly His own most marvel-
 lous work—
 Was it good to give it, or, given,
 well
 To squander it thus away ?

For surely a man might think
 So precious a gift and grand—
 God's essence in part—should be
 meted out
 With a thrifty and grudging hand.
 And hard by, on the yellowing
 corn,
 Myriads of tiny jaws
 Are bringing the husbandman's
 labour to scorn,
 And the cankerworm frets and
 gnaws,
 Which was made for these for a
 prey.

For a prey for these ? but, oh !
 Who shall read us the riddle of
 life—
 The prodigal waste, which naught
 can redress
 But a cycle of sorrow and strife,

The continual sequence of pain,
The perpetual triumph of wrong,
The whole creation in travail to make
A victory for the strong,
And not with frail insects alone?

For is not the scheme worked out
Among us who are raised so high?
Are there no wasted minds among
men—

No hearts that aspire and sigh
For the hopes which the years steal
away,
For the labour they love, and its
need of fame,
And feel the bright blade grow rusted
within,

Or are born to inherited shame,
And a portion with those that groan?

How are we fettered and caged
Within our dark prison-house
here!

We are made to look for a loving
plan;
We find everywhere sorrow and
fear.

We look for the triumph of Good;
And, from all the wide world
around,

The lives that are spent cry upward
to heaven,
From the slaughter-house of the
ground,
Till we feel that Evil is lord.

And yet are we bound to believe,
Because all our nature is so,
In Ruler touched by an infinite
Truth
For all His creatures below.
Bound, though a mocking fiend
point

To the waste, and ruin, and
pain—
Bound, though our souls should be
bowed in despair—
Bound, though wrong triumph
again and again,
And we cannot answer a word.

ON AN OLD MINSTER.

OLD minster, when my years were few,
And life seemed endless to the boy;
Clear yet and vivid is the joy
With which I gazed and thought on
you.

Thin shaft and flower-wrought capital,
High-springing arch, and blazoned
pane,
Quaint gargoyle stretching heads
profane,
And stately throne and carven stall.

The long nave lost in vaporous gray,
The mailed recumbent forms which
wait,
In mockery of earthly state,
The coming of the dreadful day.

The haunted aisles, the gathering
gloom,
By some stray shaft of eve made
fair:
The stillness of the mouldering air,
The faded legends of the tomb.

I loved them all. What care had I,—
I, the young heir of all the Past,—
That neither youth nor life might
last,
That all things living came to die!

The Past was spent, the Past was done,
 The Present was my own to hold ;
 Far off within a haze of gold
 Stretched the fair Future, scarce begun.

For me did pious builders rear
 Those reverend walls ; for me the
 song
 Of supplication, ages long,
 Had gone up daily, year by year.

And thus I loved you ; but to-day
 The long Past near and nearer shows ;
 Less bright, more clear, the Future
 grows,

And all the world is growing gray.

But you scarce bear a deeper trace
 Of time upon your solemn brow ;
 No sadder, stiller, grayer now,
 Than when I loved your reverend face.

And you shall be when I am not ;
 And you shall be a thing of joy
 To many a frank and careless boy
 When I and mine are long forgot.

Grave priests shall here with holy rage,
 Whose grandsires are as yet unborn,
 Lash, with fierce words of saintly
 scorn,

The heats of youth, the greed of age.

Proud prelates sit on that high throne,
 Whose young forefathers drive the
 plough

While Norman lineage nods below,
 In aged tramp or withered crone.

And white-haired traders feign to pray,
 Sink deep in thoughts of gain and
 gold ;

And sweet flower-faces growing old,
 Give place to fresher blooms than they.

With such new shape of creed and
 rite

As none now living may foretell ;
 A faith of love which needs not
 hell,

A stainless worship, pure and white.

Or, may be, some reverting change
 To the old faith of vanished days :
 The incensed air, the mystic praise,
 The barbarous ritual, quaint and
 strange.

Who knows ? But they are wrong who
 say

Man's work is brief and quickly past ;
 If you through all these centuries
 last,

While they who built you pass away.

The wind, the rain, the sand, are slow ;
 Man fades before his work ; scant
 trace

Time's finger findeth to efface
 Of him whom seventy years lay low.

The grass grows green awhile, and then
 Is as before ; the work he made
 Casts on his grave a reverend shade
 Through long successive lives of men.

But he ! where is he ? Lo, his name
 Has vanished from his wonted place,
 Unknown his tongue, his creed, his
 race ;

Unknown his soaring hopes of fame.

Only the creatures of the brain,—
 Just laws, wise precepts, deathless
 verse ;

These weave a chaplet for the hearse,
 And through all change unchanged
 remain.

These will I love as age creeps on ;
Gray minster, these are ever young ;
These shall be read and loved and
sung
When every stone of you is gone.

No hands have built the monument
Which to all ages shall endure ;—
High thoughts and fancies, sweet and
pure,
Lives in the quest of goodness spent.

These, though no visible forms confine
Their spiritual essence fair ;
Are deathless as the soul they bear,
And, as its Maker is, divine.

THE BITTER HARVEST.

WHO reaps the harvest of his soul,
And garners up thought's golden
grain,
For him in vain life's tempests rave,
Fate's rude shocks buffet him in vain.

The storms which shipwreck feebler
souls,
Beat harmlessly on him ; the wind,
Which whirls away the domes of pride,
Braces the sinews of his mind.

He is set within a tower of strength,
Beyond thick walls and cloisters
still ;
Where, as he sits, no faintest breath
Stirs the smooth current of his will.

He is stretched in a smiling valley,
: where,
When hills are dark, the full sun
shines ;
strings gold upon the waving fields,
And purple clusters on the vines.

He lies in a boundless sylvan shade,
While all the fields are parched
around ;
And hears a sweet bird, singing, sing-
ing,
With one clear monotone of sound.

Far, far away from the busy crowd
And chattering of the mart, he stands,
Like a statue on a lonely hill,
Pondering a scroll within its hands.

Or one who, from high convent walls,
Looks down at eve upon the plain,
And sees the children at their sport,
And turns to chant and prayer again ;

So rich, and yet so very poor,
So fruitful, yet so void of fruit ;
Removed from human hopes and fears,
Far as the man is from the brute ;

So troubled, 'neath a face of calm ;
So bound with chains, though seem-
ing free ;
So dead, though with a name to live,
That it were better not to be.

OF LOVE AND SLEEP.

I SAW Sleep stand by an enchanted
wood,
Thick lashes drooping o'er her heavy
eyes :
Leaning against a flower-cupped tree
she stood,
The night air gently breathed with
slumbrous sighs.
Such cloak of silence o'er the world
was spread,
As on Nile sands enshrouds the mighty
dead.

About her birds were dumb, and blooms
 were bowed,
And a thick heavy sweetness filled
 the air ;
White robed she seemed ; and hidden
 as in a cloud,
 A star-like jewel in her raven hair.
Downward to earth her cold torch
 would she turn
With feeble fires that might no longer
 burn.

And in her languid limbs and loosened
 zone
Such beauty dwelt ; and in her rip-
 pling hair,
As of old time was hers, and hers
 alone,
The mother of gods and men divinely
 fair ;
When whiter than white foam or sand
 she lay,
The fairest thing beneath the eye of
 day.

To her came Love, a comely youth and
 strong,
Fair as the morning of a day in
 June ;
Around him breathed a jocund air of
 song,
And his limbs moved as to a joyous
 tune :
With golden locks blown back, and
 eyes afame,
To where the sleeping maiden leant, he
 came.

Then they twain paased within that
 mystic grove
Together, and with them I, myself
 unseen.

Oh, strange, sweet land ! wherein all
 men may prove
The things they would, the things
 which might have been ;
Hopeless hopes blosom, withered youth
 revives,
And sunshine comes again to darkened
 lives.

What sights were theirs in that blest
 wonder-land ?
See, the white mountain-summits,
 framed in cloud,
Redden with sunset ; while below them
 stand
The solemn pine-woods like a funeral
 crowd ;
And lower still the vineyards twine, and
 make
A double vintage in the tranquil lake.

Or, after storm-tost nights, on some sea
 isle
The sudden tropical morning bursts ;
 and lo !
Bright birds and feathery palms, the
 green hills smile,
Strange barks, with swarthy crews,
 dart to and fro ;
And on the blue bay, glittering like a
 crown,
The white domes of some fair historic
 town.

Or, they fare northward ever, north-
 ward still,
At midnight, under the unsetting
 sun ;
O'er endless snows, from hill to icy
 hill,
Where silence reigns with death, and
 life is done :

Till from the North a sweet wind suddenly;
And hark! the warm waves of the fabulous sea.

Or, some still eve, when summer days are long,

And the mown hay is sweet, and wheat is green,
They hear some wood-bird sing the old fair song

Of joys to be, greater than yet have been;

Stretched 'neath the snowy hawthorn, till the star,

Hung high in heaven, warns them that home is far.

Or, on the herbless, sun-struck hills, by night,

Under the silent peaks, they hear the loud

Wild flutes; and onward, by the ghostly light,

Whirled in nude dances, sweeps the maddened crowd;

Till the fierce eddy seize them, and they prove

The shame, the rapture, of unfettered love.

Or, by the sacred hearth they seem to sit,

While firelight gleams on many a sunny head;

At that fair hour, before the lamp is lit,

When hearts are fullest, though no word be said,—

When the world fades, and rank and wealth and fame,

Seem, matched with this, no better than a name.

All these they knew! and then a breeze of day

Stirred the dark wood; and then they seemed to come

Forth with reluctant feet among the gray,

Bare fields, unsanguinal; and all the flame

Was burnt from out Love's eyes, and from his hair,

And his smooth cheek was marked with lines of care.

And paler showed the maid, more pure and white

And holier than before. But when I said,

"Sweet eyes, be opened;" lo, the unveiled sight

Was as the awful vision of the dead!

Then knew I, breathing slow, with difficult breath,

That Love was one with Life, and Sleep with Death.

BLIND.

THE girl who from her father's door Sees the cold storm-cloud sweep the sea,

Cries, wrestling with her anguish sore, My love! my love! ah, where is he?

And locks her fears within her breast, Sickening; while 'neath the breath-

less blaze

He lies, and dreams, in broken rest, Of homely faces,—happier days.

But when a calm is on the deep, And scarcely from the quivering blue,

The waves' soft murmur, half asleep, Speaks hope that he is well, and true:

The brave ship sinks to rise no more
Beneath the thunderous surge ; and
he,
A pale corpse floating on the sea,
Or dashed like seaweed on the shore.

TO HER PICTURE.

As one who on a lonely bed of pain
Feels the soft hand he felt when he
was young ;
Or, who at eve, on some far Eastern
plain,
Hears the old songs once by his
mother sung :
So to me, looking on thy portrait, dear,
Thou and my youth and love are ever
near.

It may be that the painter failed to
show,
How should he not ? the soul within
thine eyes,—
Their blue unruffled depths, thy cheeks
aglow
With virgin blushes that unbidden
rise ;
Thy coral lips, thy white neck, round,
and fair,
Or the sweet prodigal auburn of thy
hair.

How should he ? Not for him thou
wast, but me ;
Love shot no sudden splendour in his
eyes ;
Love guided not his hand, content to
see
Mere beauty, as of sunset-hills or
skies ;
Nor soothed his dull ear with the mystic
strain,
Heard once a life, and nevermore again.

Only the lovely shell he saw ; the cloak,
The perfect vesture of the hidden
soul.

Not for his eyes thy slumbering angel
woke,
Stretched in deep sleep, where love's
broad waters roll :
Had he but seen her wings of silver
move,
He had forgot to paint, and learned to
love.

Yet is his skill to me for ever blest,
For that which it has left of grace
and truth ;
Those sweet eyes shine, yet need no
time of rest,
Still thy fair cheek retains its rounded
youth.

In wakeful nights I light my lamp, and
know
The same dear face I knew long years
ago.

Yet worn am I, too old for love, and
gray.
Too faithful heart, thou shouldst not
still abide
With such as I, nor longer deign to stay :
These are the follies wiser worldlings
chide.
Thou wouldst transfer those glances,
wert thou wise,
To younger lives and more responsive
eyes.

Ah ! no, remain ; not thus you looked
of yore ;
Another, perhaps more worthy, bore
the prize ;
I could not tell you then the love I
bore,
Or read the soft requital in your
eyes ;

Now no change comes, now thou art
 always kind,
Then thou wast cold and changeful as
 the wind.

THE RETURN.

He stood above the well-known shore ;
 Behind, the sea stretched dull and
 gray :
And slowly with the breeze of morn
 The great ship forged away.

Almost he wished she might return,
 And speed him to some further
 change ;
The old scenes greeted him again,
 And yet all things were strange.

There were the dreams he used to dream
 In the long nights when day was
 here ;
The shady Sunday path to church,
 The winding brooklet clear.

The woods with violets blue in Spring,
 The fallow where they chased the
 hare,
The gable peeping through the elms,
 All filled him with despair.

For all was there except the past—
 The past, his youth for dross had
 sold !

The past which after-years in vain
 Prize more than all their gold.

Then age fell on him with a flash,
 Time smote him, and his soul grew
 gray,
And thoughts in busier scenes unknown,
 Chased youth and hope away.

The past, which seemed so near before,
 A step might gain it, came to be
A low cloud sunk beyond a gulf,
 Wider than any sea.

Nor what the present had in store,
 Knowing ; at last his great suspense
Grew to a bitter load of pain,
 Too great for mortal sense.

So, by the well-known paths at last,
 He gained the well-remembered door,
Sick for a voice which he should hear,
 Ah ! never, never, more

Strange children round, a stranger's
 face
 Of wonder, so the dream was o'er.
He turned ; the dead past comes not
 back.
 No, never, never, more.

FOR EVER.

For ever and for ever
 The changeless oceans roar :
And dash their thundering surges down
 Upon the sounding shore :
Yet this swift soul, this lightning will,
Shall these, while they roll on, be still ?

For ever and for ever
 The eternal mountains rise,
And list their virgin snows on high
 To meet the silent skies.
Yet shall this soul which measures all,
While these stand steadfast, sink and
 fall ?

For ever and for ever
 The swift suns roll through space ;
From age to age they wax and wane,
 Each in its ordered place :

Yet shall this soul, whose inner eye
Foretells their cycles, fade and die ?

For ever and for ever

We have been, and we are,
Unchanging as the ocean wave,
Unresting as the star :
Though suns stand still, and time be
o'er,

We are, and shall be, evermore.

BEHIND THE VEIL.

I PACED along
The dim cathedral wrapped in reverend
gloom :

I heard the sweet child's song
Spring upwards like a fountain ; and
the boom

Of the tempestuous organ-music swell ;
The hushed low voices and the silvery
bell ;

The incense-laden air ; the kneeling
throng :

I knew them all, and seemed to hear
the cry

Of countless myriads, rising deep and
strong,—

Help us ! we faint, we die.

Our knees are weak, our eyes are blind ;
We seek what we shall never find.

Show but Thy face, and we are Thine,
Unknown, Ineffable, Divine !

I heard the loud

Muezzin from the slender minaret call
"To prayer, To prayer ;" and lo ! the
busy crowd,

Merchant and prince and water-carrier,
all

Turned from the world, and rapt in
worship, knelt,

Facing the holy city ; and I felt

That from those myriads kneeling,
prostrate, bowed,
A low moan rises to the throne on
high,—

Not shut out quite by error's thickest
cloud,—

Help us ! we faint, we die.

Our knees are weak, our eyes are
blind ;

We seek what we shall never find.
Show but Thy face, and we are Thine,
Unknown, Ineffable, Divine.

I stood before
The glaring temples on the burning
plain ;

I heard the hideous roar

Rise to the stars to drown the shrieks
of pain,

What time the murderous idol swept
along.

I listened to the innocent, mystic song,
Breathed to the jewelled Lotus even-
more,

In the elder lands, through the ages,
like a sigh,

And heard in low, sweet chant, and
hateful roar,—

Help us ! we faint, we die.

Our knees are weak, our eyes are blind ;
We seek what we shall never find.

Show but Thy face, and we are Thine,
Unknown, Ineffable, Divine !

Ay : everywhere

Echoes the same exceeding bitter cry.

Yet can the Father bear

To hide His presence from the children's
eye ;

Lets loose on good and bad the plague
and sword ;

And though wrong triumph, answers
not a word ?

Only deep down in the heart doth He
declare

His constant presence ; there, though
 the outward sky
Be darkened, shines a little speck of
 fair,—
A light which cannot die.
Though knees be weak, and eyes be
 blind ;
Though we may seek, and never find ;
Here doth His hidden glory shine,
Unknown, Ineffable, Divine !

VISIONS.

OFF in the blazing summer noon,
And oft beneath the frosty moon,
When earth and air were hushed and
 still,
And absolute silence seemed to fill
The farthest border-lands of space,
I loved in childish thought to trace
Glimpses of change, which might trans-
 form
The voiceless calm to furious storm ;
Broke the dull spell, which comes to
 bind
In after-years the sluggish mind ;
And pictured, borne on fancy's wings,
The end of all created things.

Then have I seen with dreaming eye,
The blue depths of the vaulted sky
Rent without noise ; and in their stead
A wonder-world of fancy spread,
A golden city, with domes and spires,
Lit by a strange sun's mystic fires.
Portals of dazzling chrysolite,
Long colonnades of purest white ;
Streets paved with gold and jewels rare ;
And higher, in the ambient air,
A shining Presence undefined :
Swift seraphs stooping swift as wind
From pole to pole, and that vast throng
Which peopled Danté's world of song :

The last great inquest which shall close
The tale of human joys and woes ;
The dreadful Judge, the opening tomb,
And all the mystery of doom.

Then woke to find the vision vain,
And sun or moon shine calm again.

No longer, save in memory's glass,
These vanished visions come and pass ;
The clearer light of fuller day
Has chased these earlier dreams away.
Faith's eye grows dim with too much
 light,

And fancy flies our clearer sight.
But shall we mourn her day is o'er,
That these rapt visions come no more ?
Nay ; knowledge has its splendours
 too,

Brighter than Fancy's brightest hue.
I gaze now on the heavens, and see
How, midst their vast immensity,
By cosmic laws the planets roll,
Sped onwards by a central soul ;
How farther still, and still more far,
World beyond world, star beyond star,
So many, and so far, that speech
And thought must fail the sum to reach.
This universc of nature teems
With things more strange than fancy's
 dreams ;

And so at length, with clearer eye,
Soar beyond childhood's painted sky,
Up to the Lord of great and small,
Not onewhere, but pervading all :
Who made the music of the spheres,
And yet inclines an ear that hears
The faintest prayer, the humblest sigh,
The strong man's groan, the childish
 cry ;

Who guides the stars, yet without whom
No humblest floweret comes to bloom,
No lowliest creature comes to birth,
No dead leaf flutters to the earth :

Who breathed into our souls the breath,
Which neither time nor change nor
death,
Nor hurtling suns at random hurled
And dashed together, world on world,
Can ever kill or quench, till He
Bends down, and bids them not to be.

DOUBT:

WHO but has seen
Once in his life, when youth and health
ran high,
The fair, clear face of truth
Grow dark to his eye ?
Who but has known
Cold mists of doubt and icy questionings
Creep round him like a nightmare,
blotting out
The sight of better things.

A hopeless hour,
When all the voices of the soul are
dumb,
When o'er the tossing seas
No light may come,
When God and right
Are gone, and seated on the empty
throne
Are dull philosophies and words of wind,
Making His praise their own.

Better than this,
The burning sins of youth, the old
man's greed,
Than thus to live inane ;
To sit and read,
And with blind brain
Daily to treasure up a deadly doubt,
And live a life from which the light
has fled,
And faith's pure fire gone out.

Until at last,
For some blest souls, but never here
for all,
Burns out a sudden light,
And breaks the thrall,
And doubt has fled,
And the soul rises, with a clearer sight
For this its pain, its sorrow, its despair,
To God and truth and right.

Plend we for those
Gently and humbly, as befitteth men
On whom the same chill shade
Broods now as then.
So shall they learn
How an eternal wisdom rules above,
And all the cords of Being are
bound fast
To an unfailing love.

ST. DAVID'S HEAD.

SALT sprays deluge it, wild waves buffet it, hurricanes rave ;
Summer and winter, the depths of the ocean girdle it round ;
In leaden dawns, in golden noon-tides, in silvery moonlight
Never it ceases to hear the old sea's mystical sound.
Surges vex it evermore
By gray cave and sounding shore.

Think of the numberless far-away centuries, long before man,
 When the hot earth with monsters teemed, and with monsters the deep,
 And the red sun loomed faint, and the moon was caught fast in the motionless air,
 And the warm waves seethed through the haze in a secular sleep.

Rock was here and headland then,
 Ere the little lives of men.

Over it long the mastodons crashed through the tropical forest,
 And the great bats swooped overhead through the half-defined blue ;
 Then they passed, and the hideous ape-man, speechless and half-erect,
 Through weary ages of time tore and gibbered and slew.

Grayer skies and chiller air,
 But the self-same rock was there.

Then the savage came and went, and Briton and Roman and Saxon,
 Till our England grew rich and great, and her white sails covered the sea ;
 Thus through all this long story of ours, civil progress and vanquished foeman,
 From Crecy to Trafalgar, from the bondsman down to the free,

Still those dark rocks, and beneath
 Keeps the sea its face of death.

So it shall be when the tide of our greatness has ebbed to the shallows ;
 So when there floats not a ship on this storm-tossed westerly main,
 Hard by, the minster crumbles, the city has shrunk to a village ;
 Thus shall we shrink one day, and our forests be pathless again ;
 And the headland stern shall stand,
 Guarding an undiscovered land.

Vex it, O changeless ocean ; rave round it, tempests unceasing ;
 Sink it, great earthquakes, deep in the depths of the fathomless sea ;
 Burn them, fierce fires of the centre, burn rock and ocean together,
 Till the red globe flare throughout space, through the ages to be.

Cease, make an end, dull world, begone .
 How shall I cease while you roll on ?

Time, oh, horrible ! Space, oh, terrible ! Infinite Void !
 Dreadful abysses of Being ! blighting a finite brain ;
 How shall the creatures of thought subsist, when the thinker ceases ?
 Begone, dull figments, be done ! not alone shall you dare to remain.
 Without me you yourselves must fall ;
 I hold the measure of you all.

IN VOLHYNIA.

IN Volhynia the peasant mothers,
When spring-time brings back the
leaves,
And the first swallows dart and twitter
Under the cottage eaves,—

Sit mute at their windows, and listen,
With eyes brimming over with tears,
To the broken sounds which are wafted
To their eager watching ears.

And throw out bread and honey
To the birds as they scintillate by ;
And hearts full of yearning and longing,
Borne out on the wings of a sigh.

For they think that their dear lost
children,
The little ones who are gone,
Come back thus to the heartsick
mothers
Who are toiling and sorrowing on.

And those sun-lit wings and flashing
White breasts, to their tear-dimmed
eyes
Bring visions of white child-angels
Floating in Paradise.

And again to the sounds they hearken,
Which grew silent while incomplete,
The music of childish laughter,
The patter of baby feet.

Till the hearts which are barren and
childless,
The homes which are empty and
cold :
The nests whence the young have de-
parted,
Are filled with young life as of old.

Thus each spring, to those peasant
mothers,
Comes the old Past again and again ;
And those sad hearts quicken and
blossom,
In a rapture of sorrowless pain.

THE LIVING PAST.

O FAITHFUL souls that watch and
yearn,
Expectant of the coming light,
With kindling hearts and eyes that burn
With hope to see the rule of right ;

The time of peace and of good will,
When the thick clouds of wrong and
pain

Roll up as from a shining hill,
And never more descend again ;

The perfect day, the golden year,
The end of sorrow and of sighs ;
Whether the heavenly change be here,
Or far beyond the sunset skies,—

I cherish you, I love your faith,
I long with you that this may be ;
But hark, a dreary voice which saith,
“Vain dreamer, what were it to thee !”

For though the blest hour strike before
Another sunrise vex the earth,
And pain and evil rule no more,
But vanish in the newer birth,—

Though war and hatred come to cease,
And sorrow be no more, nor sin,
And in their stead an endless peace
Its fair unbroken reign begin,—

What comfort have ye? What shall blot
The memories of bitter years,

Of joys which have been, but are not,
And floods of unforgotten tears?

The painful records graven clear
On carven rock or deathless page ;
The long unceasing reign of fear,
The weary tale of lust and rage ;

The ills whose dark sum baffles thought,
Done day by day beneath the sun ?
" That which is done," the old sage
taught,
" Not God Himself can make un-
done."

For that which has been, still must live,
And 'neath the shallow Present last.
Oh, who will sweet oblivion give,
Who free us from the dreadful Past ?

CHANGES.

You see that tall house opposite?
Three times within the fleeting year,
Since last the summer-time was here,
Great changes have gone over it.

For first a bridal bright and gay
Filled the long street with riotous
sound ;
And amid smiles from all around,
The newly-wedded passed away.

And when the violets came once more,
And lambs were born, a concourse
went,
Still gayer, still more innocent,
To christening from that stately door.

And now the mute house dull and drear,
From blinded eyes, stares blank and
white ;
And amid dust and glaring light,
The black lines slowly disappear.

ALONE.

WHAT shall it profit a man
To have stood by the source of things,
To have spent the fair years of his
youthful prime
In mystical questionings ;
To have scaled the lovely height,
While his brothers slept below ;
To have seen the vision bright
Which but few on earth may know,—
If when his task be done
He lives his life alone ?
If in the busy street
None come whom he may greet ?
If in his lonely room
With the night the shadows deepen into
ghostly shapes of gloom ?

It may be his soul may say,
" I have gained me a splendid dower ;
I can look around on the toiling
crowd,
With the pride of a conscious power.
I can hear the passer-by
Tell of all my world-wide fame ;
I have friends I shall not see
Who dwell fondly on my name.
If the sweet smile of wife
Light not my joyless life,
If to my silent home
No childish laughter come,
Shall I no solace find
In communion with the monarchs of the
fair broad realm of mind ? "

But when sickness wears him, or age
Creeps on, and his soul doth yearn
For the tender hand and the soothing
voice

That shall never more return
 When the lessening throng of friends,
 Not unkind, but each one set
 Safe within white walls of home,
 All the world without forget,—
 Shall not old memories rise
 'Twixt book and weary eyes,
 Till knowledge come to seem
 A profitless vague dream ?
 Shall not he sometimes sigh
 For the careless past unlearn'd, and
 the happy days gone by ?

Ah ! not to be happy alone,
 Are men sent, or to be glad.
 Oft-times the sweetest music is made
 By the voices of the sad.
 The thinker oft is bent
 By a too-great load of thought ;
 The discoverer's soul grows sick
 With the secret vainly sought :
 Lonely may be the home,
 No breath of fame may come,
 Yet through their lives doth shine
 A purple light Divine,
 And a nobler pain they prove
 Than the bloom of lower pleasures, or
 the fleeting spell of love.

SEA VOICES.

PEACE, moaning Sea ; what tale have
 you to tell ?
 What mystic tidings, all unknown
 before ?
 Whether you break in thunder on
 the shore,
 Or whisper like the voice within the
 shell,
 O moaning Sea, I know your burden
 well.

'Tis but the old dull tale, filled full of
 pain ;
 The finger on the dial-plate of time,
 Advancing slow with pitiless beat
 sublime,
 As stoops the day upon the fading
 plain ;
 And that has been which may not be
 again.

The voice of yearning, deep but scarce
 expressed,
 For something which is not, but may
 be yet ;
 Too full of sad continuance to forget,
 Too troubled with desires to be at rest,
 Too self-conflicting ever to be blest.

The voice of hopes and aspirations
 high,
 Swallowed in sand, or shivered on
 the rock ;
 Tumultuous life dashed down with
 sudden shock ;
 And passionate protests, narrowed to a
 sigh,
 From hearts too weak to live,—too
 strong to die.

The voice of old beliefs which long
 have fled.
 Gone with a shriek, and leaving
 naught behind,
 But some vague utterance, cold as
 wintry wind,—
 Some dim remembrance of a ghostly
 dread
 Which lingers still when faith itself is
 dead.

And, above all, through thund'rous
 wintry roar,
 And summer ripple, this, and this
 alone,

For ever do I make this barren
moan :—
No end, there is no end,—on Time's
dull shore
I wail, I beat, I thunder, evermore.

BERLIN, 1871.

THE spring day was all of a flutter
with flags ;
The mad chimes were beating like
surf in the air ;
The beggars had slunk out of sight with
their rags ;
And the balconies teemed with the
rich and the fair.

And below, on each side, the long
vistas were set
In a frame-work of faces, patient and
white, —
Wives, mothers, sweethearts, with full
eyes wet,
And sick hearts longing to see the
sight.

Till at length, when the evening was
waning, there ran
A stir through the crowd, and far-off,
like a flame,
The setting sun burned on the helmets
of the van,
And with trampling of hoofs the
proud conquerors came.

And with every step they advanced,
you might hear
Women's voices, half-maddened with
long-deferred joy :
“ Thank God ! he is safe. See, my
love, we are here !
See ! here am I, darling ; and this
is our boy ! ”

Or, “ Here am I, dearest, still faithful
and true ;
Your own love as of old ! ” Or an
agonised cry,
As the loved face came not with the
comrades she knew
And the rough soldiers found not a
word to reply.

And pitiful hands led her softly away,
With a loving heart rent and broken
in twain ;
And the triumph sweeps onward, in
gallant array,—
The life and the hope, the despair
and the pain.

Where was it ? In Egypt, Assyria,
Greece, Rome ?
Ages since, or to-day ; in the old
world, or new ?
Who shall tell ? From all time these
strange histories come ;
And to-day, as of old, the same story
is true.

And the long line sweeps past, and
the dull world rolls on
Though the rapture is dead and the
sad tears are dry,
And careless of all, till the progress be
done,
Life rides like a conqueror triumph-
ing by.

THE BEACON.

FAIR shines the beacon from its lonely
rock,
Stable alone amid the unstable
waves :

In vain the surge leaps with continual
shock,

In vain around the wintry tempest
raves,

And ocean thunders in her sounding
caves.

For here is life within the gate of death,
Calm light and warmth amid the
storm without;

Here sleeping love breathes with un-
troubled breath,

And faith, clear-eyed, pierces the
clouds of doubt

And monstrous depths which com-
pass her about.

So calm, so pure, yet prisoned and
confined;

Fenced by white walls from pleasure
as from pain.

Not always glooms the sea or shrieks
the wind:

Sometimes light zephyrs curl the
azure main,

And the sweet sea-nymphs glide
with all their train.

Or Aphrodite rises from the foam,
And lies all rosy on the golden sand,
And o'er the purple plains the Nereids
roam;

Sweet laughter comes, borne from
the joyous band,

And faint sweet odours from the
far-off land.

And straightway the impatient soul
within

Loathes its white house which to a
jail doth turn;

Careless of true or false, of right or
sin,

Careless of praying hands or eyes
that burn,
Or aught that sense can feel or mind
discern.

Knowing but this,—that the unknown
is blest,

Holding delight of free untrammelled
air:

Delight of toil sweeter than any rest,
Fierce storms with cores of calm for
those who dare
Black rayless nights than fairest
noons more fair.

And drifting forth at eve in some frail
boat,

Beholds the old light, like a setting
star,

Sink in the sea, and still doth fare and
float

Adown the night till day-break shows
afar,—

And hark the faint low thunders of
the bar.

Nor if indeed he reach the Blessed Isle,
Nor if those pitiless crests shall
plunge him down,

Knows he; but whether breathless
azure smile,

Or furious night and horrible tem-
pests frown,

Living or dying, Freedom wears a
crown.

THE GARDEN OF REGRET.

BEYOND the dim walls of the shadowy
Past,

A sweet vague host of fancies
flourishes,

Like garden seeds in some rough hollow cast,
Which all unasked the kind earth nourishes,
And sends up tender blooms more sweet and fair
Than the dull Present rears with all its care.

There on its thin stem hangs the frail white flower;
Far sweeter now she shines within the shade,
Than when of old within the trim-kept bower
And perfumed lush parterres her home she made ;
Because her sister blooms are past and gone,
And this alone it is that lingers on.

The same white flower,—but oh, the depths of change !
Before, the creamy petals, broad and strong,
Were all adust with gold, and filled with strange
Sweet scents, which lurked the odorous depths among ;
Deep in her honeyed wells, the bee would stay
Content, and birds sing round the live-long day.

The same white flower—yet changed in scent and hue.
Now the fair feeble petals curl and shrink ;
The dead smooth surfaces are veined with blue ;
No honeyed draughts they hold for bee to drink,

Nor busy hum, nor joyous song is heard.
What hath she left to charm or bee or bird ?

Only a faint sweet odour lingers yet,
Dearer than those rich scents of former years :
A fragile fairness, fairer through regret,
And watered by the dewy fount of tears.
To me that outcast flower is dearer grown,
Than when in those fair gardens over-blown.

I set her in the garden of my heart,
And water her from life's sincerest spring ;
And lo ! once more the frail stems quicken and start,
Fair honeyed blooms arise and blithe birds sing :
The old sweet flower in scent and gorgeous hue,
But not the tender grace that once I knew.

Alas ! not in the Present will she grow :
The Present has its own blooms sweet and bright ;
Within its four walls life's fair pleasures blow,
And each gay season brings its own delight :
Far off in dewy shades the exile sweet Grows fair, and paths untrodden by living feet.

There let her stay. I know not if my theme
Be love, or some fair child of heart or mind :

Young friendships, hopes, beliefs,
which like a dream
Pass from us leaving some sweet
ghost behind.

Leave them behind, they have been ;
others are,
And shall be. Lo ! the spring time is
not far.

SECOND SERIES (1874).

TO AN UNKNOWN POET.*

DEAR friend, who, two long centuries
ago,
Didst tread where since my grandsires
trod,
Along thy devious Usk's untroubled
flow,
Breathing thy soul to God.

I seek, I, born in these our later days,
Using the measure thou didst love,
With halting tribute of too tardy praise,
A poet throned above.

I in the self-same venerable halls
And gray quadrangles made my
home,
Which heard, new-built, within their
recent walls,
Thy youthful footsteps come.

A little grayer now and stiller grown,
The tranquil refuge now, as then,
Where our dear country glories in her
own,
Apart from alien men.

There, on thy musings broke the painful
sound

Of arms ; the long-plumed cavaliers
Clanged thro' the courts—the low fat
fields around

Were filled with strife and tears.

* Henry Vaughan, the Silurist, died near
Brecon, 1665.

Constrained by promptings of thy
ancient race,
Thy gown and books thou flungst
away,
To meet the sturdy Roundhead face to
face
On many a hard-fought day,

Till thy soft soul grew sick, and thou
didst turn
To our old hills ; and there, ere
long,
Love for thy Amoret, at times, would
burn
In some too servid song.

But soon thy wilder pulses stayed, and,
life
Grown equable, thy sweet muse mild,
Sobered by tranquil love of child and
wife,
Flowed pure and undefiled.

A humble healer thro' a life obscure,
Thou didst expend thy homely days ;
Sweet Swan of Usk ! few know how
clear and pure
Are thy unheeded lays.

One poet shall become a household
name
Into the nation's heart ingrown ;
One more than equal miss the meed of
fame,
And live and die unknown.

So thou, surviving in thy lonely age,
All but thy own undying love
Didst pour upon the sympathetic page,
Words which all hearts can move—

So quaintly fashioned as to add a grace
To the sweet fancies which they bear,
Even as a bronze delved from some
ancient place
I or very rust shows fair.

They all are gone into the world of
light!"
It is thy widowed muse that sings,
And then mounts upward from our
dazzled sight
On heavenward soaring wings

"He that hath found some fledged
bird's nest may know"
"At first sight if the bird be flown,"
"But what fair dell or grove he sings in
now,"
"That is to him unknown"

"And yet, as angels in some brighter
dreams"
"Call to the soul when man doth
sleep,"
"So some strange thoughts transcend
our wonted themes,"
"And into glory peep"

"O father of eternal life and all
"Created glories under Thee!"
"Resume Thy Spirit from this world of
thrall"
"Into true liberty."

* * * * *
Thou hast rejoined thy dear ones now,
and art,
Dear soul, as then thou wouldest be,
free.

I, still a prisoner, strive to do my part
In memory of thee.

Thou art so high, and yet unknown
shall I
Repine that I too am obscure?
Nay, what care I, though all my verse
shall die,
If only it is pure?

So some new singer of the days to be,
Reading this page with soft young
eyes,
Shall note the tribute which I pay to
thee
With youth's sweet frank surprise.

And musing in himself, perchance shall
say,
"Two bards whom centuries past are
here—
One whose high fame and name defy
decay,
And one who held him dear."

COMFORT.

I ho' love be bought and honour sold,
The sunset keeps its glow of gold,
And round the rosy summits cold
The white clouds hover, fold on fold

I ho' over ripe the nations rot,
I ho' right be dead and faith forgot,
Tho' one dull cloud the heavens may
blot,
The tender leaf delayeth not.

Tho' all the world lie sunk in ill,
The bounteous autumns mellow still,
By virgin sand and sea-worn hill
The constant waters ebb and fill.

From out the throng and stress of lies,
From out the painful noise of sighs,
One voice of comfort seems to rise :
“ It is the meaner part that dies.”

SONG.

If ever, dear,
I might at last the barren victory gain,
After long struggle and laborious pain,
And many a secret tear,
To think, since think I must of thee,
Not otherwise than thou of me.

Haply I might
Thy chilling coldness, thy disdain, thy
pride,
Which draw me, half reluctant, to thy
side,
With a like meed requite,
And I my too fond self despise,
Seeing with disenchanted eyes.

But now, alas !
So fast a prisoner am I to my love,
No power there is that can my chains
remove,
So sweet the caged hours pass,
That, if it parted me from thee,
I would not willingly grow free.

Nor would I dare
To ask for recompence of love again,
Who love thee for the height of thy
dissain.

Thou wouldst not show so fair
If we should own an equal flame,
Unequal souls, in love the same.

Full well I know
That what I worship is not wholly thee,
But a fair dream, a pious fantasy.
Such as at times doth grow

On yearnings of the cloistered mind,
Or the rapt vision of the blind.

Scorn me then, sweet,
I would not thou shouldst leave thy
lofty place,
Thy lover should not see thee face to
face,
But prostrate at thy feet.
No recompence, no equal part I seek,
Only that thou be strong and I be
weak.

OH, SNOWS SO PURE!

Oh, snows so pure ! oh, peaks so high !
I lift to you a hopeless eye.

I see your icy ramparts drawn
Between the sleepers and the dawn.

I see you, when the sun has set,
Flush with the dying daylight yet.

I see you, passionless and pure,
Above the lightnings stand secure ;

But may not climb, for now the hours
Are spring's, and earth a maze of
flowers.

And now, 'mid summer's dust and heat,
I stay my steps for childish feet.

And now, when autumn glows, I fear
To lose the harvest of the year.

Now winter frowns, and life runs slow,
Even on the plains I tread thro' snow.

While you are veiled, or, dimly seen,
Only reveal what might have been ;

And where high hope would once aspire
Broods a vast storm-cloud dealing fire.

Oh, snows so pure ! oh, peaks so high !
I shall not reach you till I die !

THE BEGINNINGS OF FAITH.

All travail of high thought,
All secrets vainly sought,
All struggles for right, heroic, perpetually fought.

Faint gleams of purer fire,
Conquests of gross desire,
Whereby the fettered soul ascends continually higher.

Sweet cares for love or friend
Which ever heavenward tend,
Too deep and true and tender to have on earth their end.

Vile hearts malign and fell,
Lives which no tongue may tell,
So dark and dread and shameful that they breathe a present hell.

White mountain, deep-set lake,
Sea wastes which surge and break,
Fierce storms which, roaring from the north, the midnight forests shake.

Fair morns of summer days,
Rich harvest eves that raise
The soul and heart o'erburdened to an ecstasy of praise.

Low whispers, vague and strange,
Which through our being range,
Breathing perpetual presage of some mighty coming change.

These in the soul do breed
Thoughts which, at last, shall lead
To some clear, firm assurance of a satisfying creed.

A MEMORY.

DOWN dropped the sun upon the sea,
The gradual darkness filled the land.
And 'mid the twilight, silently,
I felt the pressure of a hand.

And a low voice : "Have courage, friend.
Be of good cheer, 'tis not for long ;
He conquers who awaits the end,
And dares to suffer and be strong."

I have seen many a land since then,
Known many a joy and many a pain.
Victor in many a strife of men,
Vanquished again and yet again.

The ancient sorrow now is not,
Since time can heal the keenest smart ;
Yet the vague memory, scarce forgot,
Lingers deep down within the heart.

Still, when the ruddy flame of gold
Fades into gray on sea and land,
I hear the low sweet voice of old,
I feel the pressure of a hand.

THE NEW ORDER.

THE old lives are dead and gone and rotten,
The old thoughts shall never more be thought,
The old faiths have failed and are forgotten,
The old strifes are done, the fight is fought.

And with a clang and roll, the new creation
Bursts forth 'mid tears and blood and tribulation.

Sweet they were, the old days that are ended,
The golden years, the happy careless hours
Then, like Pagan gods on the asphodel extended,
Dreaming, men wove them fancies fair as flowers.
Love laid near them, Art to cheer them, youthful Beauty
Sitting crowned upon the marble throne of Duty.

All good things were theirs to cherish
—lives grown finer
From the heritage of long ancestral ease,
And a nobler port, and temperate mien diviner
Than their labours and their vigils leave to these ;
Gentler voices, smiles more gracious, and the fashion
Of their soft lives tuned to pity and compassion.

Naught men knew of science, now grown rigid
With its teaching of inexpiable sin :
Nor the dull pedantic gospel, dead and frigid,
Of a heaven where mind alone may enter in,
Doom awaiting, stern and silent, all transgression,
And no saint with power to make an intercession.

For a Ruler, as men thought they saw above them,
More than earthly rulers, pitiful and mild,
A Father with a stronger love to love them
Than the love an earthly father bears his child—
God above them, and for pleader and defender
Christ's face stooping, like his mother's, true and tender.

But now there seems no place for the Creator
To hold his long unbroken chain of law,
Nor any need for heaven-sent Mediator,
Nor the Providence our fathers thought they saw.
Only a dull world-system, always tending
To a blind goal, by a blind rule unbending.

And for the courtesy and tender graces,
The chivalries and charities of old,
A dull and equal arrogance effaces
Soft sympathies by hard demands and cold ;
And the giver giveth not, lest any blame him,
And the taker may not take, lest taking shame him.

Be still, oh ye of little faith, repining
That the purpose of the Eternal will is dead.
The silent stars forget not yet their shining,
Daily the full sun journeys overhead.

How shall mind's realm alone forget
its reason,
When the sure years roll season after
season ?

There shall rise from this confused
sound of voices

A firmer faith than that our fathers
knew,
A deep religion, which alone rejoices
In worship of the Infinitely True,
Not built on rite or portent, but a finer
And purer reverence for a Lord diviner.

There shall come from out this noise of
strife and groaning

A broader and a juster brotherhood,
A deep equality of aim, postponing
All selfish seeking to the general good.
There shall come a time when each
shall to another
Be as Christ would have him—brother
unto brother.

There shall come a time when knowl-
edge wide extended,

Sinks each man's pleasure in the
general health,
And all shall hold irrevocably blended
The individual and the common-
wealth,

When man and woman in an equal union
Shall merge, and marriage be a true
communion.

There shall come a time when brother-
hood shows stronger

Than the narrow bounds which now
distract the world ;
When the cannons roar and trumpets
blare no longer,
And the ironclad rusts, and battle
flags are furled ;

When the bars of creed and speech and
race, which sever,
Shall be fused in one humanity for ever.

Oh, glorious end ! oh, blessed consum-
mation !

Oh, precious day ! for which we wait
and yearn.

Thou shalt come, and knit men nation
unto nation.

But not for us, who watch to day
and burn,

Thou shalt come, but after what long
years of trial,

Weary watchings, baffled longings, dull
denial !

AT MIDNIGHT.

THEY were two poor young girls, little
older than children,
Who passed through the midnight
streets of the city

Singing.

Poorly clad, morning-eyed, with a
strange look of shyness,
Linked arms, and round cheeks, and
smooth heads bent together,
Singing.

Singing, great Heaven ! with their
fresh childish voices,
Some low-murmured ditty, half hymn-
tune, half love-song,
Singing,

Always by hushed square, and long
street deserted,
As from school by the old village street
on fair evenings,
Singing,

Singing, and knowing it not, the old
burden
That is born out of secular wrongs and
oppressions,
Singing,

Of selfish riches, of misery and hun-
ger,
Of sin that is bred of the wants of the
wretched,
Singing,

Of poor bribes that purchase souls, of
the endless,
Perpetual harvest of pain and of evil,
Singing,

So, they passed to the flaring sin-
befouled places,
And amid the thick throng of the fallen
I lost them,

Singing,
A hymn-tune, a love-song, a prayer
chanted backward,
A witch spell unholy, a sweet suffrage
saintly
Singing.

NEMESIS.

WHO, without fear
Piercing the inmost deeps of silent
thought,
Has won the prize with lonely labour
sought,
And many a bitter tear,
He in his breast doth hold
A rarer thing than gold,
And a fair treasure greater than in
words is told.

For he shall learn,
Not from another's lore, but his own
soul,
Whither life's hidden ocean currents
roll,
And with sure helm shall turn
Into a haven fair,
Where, on the breathless air,
Nor wave nor storm shall break, but
peace is everywhere.

There, in light boat
Laid on the soft breast of the summer
sea,
Lapt day by day in great tranquillity,
He carelessly shall float.
He scarce shall see or hear
A sight or sound of fear,
Only a low-voiced siren always gliding
near

Without the bar
The enormous surges leap from sea to
sky.
Upon the ghostly inland summits
high
The avalanche thunders far.
On the dull plains below,
In long successions slow
The toiling generations sow, and reap,
and sow.

Dream-like, he sees
The lurid smoke blot the beleaguered
town,
Or the great earthquake shake the city
down;
Labours and miseries;
Fire takes them—famine, flood,
And fever's hideous brood.
By night the black skies reddens with a
glare like blood,

For him, meanwhile,
Laid in the shelter of his silken sail,
Tho' wind and storm on sea and land
prevail,

The enchanted waters smile.
Always in that calm deep,
Wherein life's currents sleep,
He sees high heaven reflected, tho' all
men may weep.

Yet now and then
Between the stars and him, deep, sunk
below,
He starts to see a strange dead semi-
blance grow,
Gone from the eyes of men.
Some thin and pale-eyed ghost,
By marred reflections crost,
Of thoughts, and faiths, and yearnings
long since lost.

And if these fade
Betimes, he slowly gains to peace
again ;
But if too long they tarry, such a pain
Those clear depths doth invade,
That for sheer terror he,
And utter misery,
Flies to the storm-wrapt hills and
hungry calling sea.

TO A CHILD OF FANCY.

MY little dove, my little lamb,
In whom again a child I am ;
My innocent, on whose fair head
The glories of the unknown are shed ;

Who thro' the laughing summer day
Spendest the rosy hours in play,
Too much by joyous life possest
To give a willing thought to rest ;

Who, with the earliest shades of night,
White-robed, in happy slumbers light,
Recallest in thy stainless calm
An angel resting from its psalm ;

Whence art thou come? What power
could teach
The secret of thy broken speech?
What agile limb, what stalwart arm,
Like thy sweet feebleness can charm?

With what a rapture of surprise
This fair world meets thy steadfast eyes,
As if they saw reflected there
Faint images of scenes more fair,

Leaving another heaven behind,
A heaven on earth thou canst to find ;
This world, so full of misery,
Opens celestial gates for thee.

Oh! if thou mightst not e'er grow wise
With the sad learning born of sighs ;
If those soft eyes might never here
Grow dim for any bitter tear.

Vain thought,—no creature born of
earth
Blooms best 'neath cloudless skies of
mirth ;
Only soft rains and clouds can dress
Life's tree with flowers of blessedness.

Whate'er the lot thy fate shall give,
At least, while life is mine to live,
Thou shalt not lack a share of love,
My little lamb, my little dove !

SONG.

IT was not that thy eyes
Were blue as autumn skies,
It was not that thy hair
Was as an angel's fair.

No excellence of form could move
A finer soul to so much love.

Nor that in thee I sought
For precious gems of thought,
Nor ever hoped to find
Thid treasure in thy mind.
Gray wisdom comes with time and age,
And thine was an unwritten page.

But that I seemed in thee
My other self to see,
Yet purer and more high
Than meets my inner eye,
Like that enamoured boy who, gazing
down,
His lower self would in his higher
drown.

THE ORGAN-BOY.

GREAT brown eyes,
Thick plumes of hair,
Old corduroys
The worse for wear ;
A buttoned jacket,
And peeping out
An ape's grave poll,
Or a guinea pig's snout ;
A sun-kissed face,
And a dimpled mouth,
With the white flashing teeth
And soft smile of the south ;
A young back bent,
Not with age or care,
But the load of poor music
'Tis fated to bear :
But a commonplace picture
To commonplace eyes,
Yet full of a charm
Which the thinker will prize.

They were stern cold rulers,
Those Romans of old,
Scorning art and letters
For conquest and gold ;
Yet leavening mankind,
In mind and in tongue,
With the laws that they made
And the songs that they sung :
Sitting rose-crowned,
With pleasure-choked breath,
As the nude young limbs crimsoned,
Then stiffened in death ;
Piling up monuments
Greater than praise,
Thoughts and deeds that shall live
To the latest of days :
Adding province to province,
And sea to sea,
Till the idol fell down
And the world rose up free.

And this is the outcome,
This vagabond child
With that statue-like face
And eyes soft and mild,
This creature so humble,
So gay, yet so meek,
Whose sole strength is only
The strength of the weak ;
Of those long cruel ages
Of lust and of guile,
Naught left us to-day
But an innocent smile.
For the laboured appeal
Of the orator's art,
A few childish accents
That reach to the heart.
For those stern legions speeding
O'er sea and o'er land,
But a pitiful glance
And a suppliant hand.
I could moralize still ;
But the organ begins,

And the tired ape swings downward
And capers and grins:

And away flies romance.
And yet, time after time,
As I dwell on days spent
In a sunnier clime,
Of blue lakes deep set
In the olive-clad mountains,
Of gleaming white palaces
Girt with cool fountains,
Of minsters where every
Carved stone is a treasure,
Of sweet music hovering
'Twixt pain and 'twixt pleasure ;
Of chambers enriched,
On all sides, overhead,
With the deathless creations
Of hands that are dead ;
Of still cloisters holy,
And twilight arcade,
Where the lovers still saunter
Thro' chequers of shade ;
Of tomb and of temple,
Arena and column,
'Mid to-day's garish splendours,
Sombre and solemn ;
Of the marvellous town
With the salt-flowing street,
Where colour burns deepest,
And music most sweet ;
Of her the great mother,
Who centuries sate
'Neath a black shadow blotting
The days she was great ;
Who was plunged'in such shame—
She, our source and'our home—
That a foul spectre only
Was left us of Rome ;
She who, seeming to sleep
Thro' all ages to be,
Was the priests', is mankind's,
Was a slave, and is free !

I turn with grave thought
To this child of the ages,
And to all that is writ
In Time's hidden pages.
Shall young Howards or Guelphs,
In the days that shall come,
Wander forth seeking bread
Far from England and home ?

Shall they sail to new continents,
English no more,
Or turn—strange reverse—
To the old classic shore ?
Shall fair locks and blue eyes,
And the rose on the cheek,
Find a language of pity
The tongue cannot speak—
“ Not English, but angels ? ”
Shall this tale be told
Of Romans to be
As of Romans of old ?
Shall they too have monkeys
And music ? Will any
Try their luck with an engine
Or toy spinning-jenny ?

Shall we too be led
By that mirage of Art
Which saps the true strength
Of the national heart ?
The sensuous glamour,
The dreamland of grace,
Which rot the strong manhood
They fail to replace ;
Which at once are the glory,
The ruin, the shame,
Of the beautiful lands
And ripe souls whence they came ?

Oh, my England ! oh, Mother
Of Freemen ! oh, sweet,
Sad toiler majestic,
With labour-worn feet !

Brave worker, girt round,
Inexpugnable, free,
With tumultuous sound
And salt spume of the sea,
Fenced off from the clamour
Of alien mankind
By the surf on the rock,
And the shriek of the wind,
Tho' the hot Gaul shall envy,
The cold German flout thee,
Thy far children scorn thee,
Still thou shalt be great,
Still march on uncaring,
Thy perils unsharing,
Alone, and yet daring
Thy infinite fate.
Yet ever remembering
The precepts of gold,
That were written in part
For the great ones of old—
“ Let other hands fashion
The marvels of art ;
To thee fate has given
A loftier part.
To rule the wide peoples ;
To bind them to thee ”
By the sole bond of loving,
That bindeth the free.
To hold thy own place,
Neither lawless nor slave ;
Not driven by the despot,
Nor tricked by the knave.

But these thoughts are too solemn,
So play, my child, play,
Never heeding the connoisseur
Over the way,
The last dances of course ;
Then, with scant pause between,
“ Home, Sweet Home,” the “ Old
Hundredth,”
And “ God Save the Queen.”

See the poor children swarm
From dark court and dull street,
As the gay music quickens
The lightsome young feet.
See them now whirl away,
Now insidiously come,
With a coy grace which conquers
The squalor of home.
See the pallid cheeks flushing
With innocent pleasure
At the hurry and haste
Of the quick-footed measure.
See the dull eyes now bright,
And now happily dim,
For some soft-dying cadence
Of love-song or hymn.
Dear souls, little joy
Of their young lives have they,
So thro’ hymn-tune and song-tune
Play on, my child, play.

For tho’ dull pedants chatter
Of musical taste,
Talk of hindered researches,
And hours run to waste ;
Tho’ they tell us of thoughts
To ennable mankind
Which your poor measures chase
From the labouring mind ;
While your music rejoices
One joyless young heart,
Perish bookworms and books,
Perish learning and art—
Of my vagabond fancies
I’ll e’en take my fill.
“ Qualche cosa, signor ? ”
Yes, my child, that I will.

PROCESSIONS.

To and fro, to and fro,
The long, long processions go,

Fainter now and now more bright,
 Now in shadow, now in light ;
 Gay and sad, and gay again,
 Mixed of pleasure, mixed of pain.
 Bridal song and burial dirge,
 Rippling blue and leaden surge :
 Sunlit plain and storm-wrapt hill,
 Saintly lives or stained with ill ;
 Youth and fire and frolic mirth,
 Cold age bending back to earth ;
 Hope and faith and high endeavour,
 Dead lives slowly waning ever ;
 Gleams of varying sun and shade,
 Buds that burst, and flowers that fade ;
 Lives that spring, and lives that fall,
 And a Hidden Will o'er all.

FOR LIFE.

SHUT in by self, as by a brazen wall,
 In a dry, windless court alone,
 Where no refreshing dews of eve may
 fall,
 Nor morning sun has shone.

But ever broader, ever higher, higher,
 And ever yearly stronger grown,
 In long circuitous folds high towers
 aspire

Around her central throne.

And every year adds some fair outer-
 court,
 Green, lit with fountains, tended well,
 Some dainty pleasaunce fit for joy and
 sport,
 But not wherein to dwell.

Or some high palace spired with fretted
 gold,
 And tricked with gems of thought and
 art ;

In blank perspective ranks its chambers
 cold,
 Too fair to touch the heart.

For far within the inmost coil of towers,
 Wrapt round with shadows like a cloak,
 Where on the twilight hush of slow-
 paced hours
 Full utterance never broke ;

Neither of laughter nor the painful
 sound
 Of great thoughts come to sudden birth,
 Nor murmurs from the Sea that frets
 around
 The dull laborious earth ;

Nor voice of love or child, nor note of
 glee,
 Nor sigh, nor any weal nor woe—
 Naught but a chill, at times, as hope-
 lessly
 The slow years come and go ;

She broods immured, a devil or a saint,
 Shut fast within a lonely cell,
 Peopled with beatific visions faint,
 Or ghostly shapes of hell.

And every year she hears from some
 high gate
 That breaks the dizzy circuit of the
 wall,
 By hands invisible, but strong as fate,
 The loud portcullis fall.

And every year upon her duller ear
 Faint and more faint the outward
 echoes come,
 Fainter the mingled tones of hope and
 fear,
 To this her cloistered home.

'Till, when the weary circuit's done and past,
The last gate clangs, the tall towers sway and fall,
A great voice calls with thunders, and at last
The captive breaks her thrall !

IN THE PARK.

THE stock-jobbers' madams dash In splendour thro' park and street.
'Tis a lightning of wheels that flash,
'Tis a thunder of high-stepping feet.
Shrink aside, vile churl, for these princesses bold —
These creatures of jewels and ermine and gold —

As they loll by in insolent pride,
Scarce deigning a glance of the eye,
They scatter their mud stains far and wide
On the humbler passer-by —
Some rhymester it may be, whose bitter pen
Shall pay them their mud stains with interest again.

And, meanwhile, in some fetid street
Their spouse and provider sits —
A swindler fattening on lie and cheat,
Sole fruit of his sordid wits —
Full fed and bloated, or wan and pale,
And haunted with fears of an imminent gaol.

When my lady of high degree
Rolls by with her lackeys ablaze,
It gladdens my heart, good madams, to see
The disdain of you in her gaze.

I love her little, but, matched with you,
I could fall on my knees to a pride so true.

Or when Lais rattles by
In her vesture of visible shame,
Poor child, I whisper, and who am I
To call her dead life by its name ?
Sad tawdry splendours that, one sure day,
Will spread swift pinions and flutter away !

But with you, vile spawn of deceit,
What need to be chary of ire ?
Get down, I say, on your useless feet,
And cleanse them with honest mire.
Down with you, 'tis time, ere your coaches be made
The central block of a new barricade.

Yet, perhaps, since in this poor life .
Things are double, each against each,
Among you sometimes is the mother and wife
With her darlings to cherish and teach,
The gentle lady, tender and kind,
With no shadow of evil on heart or mind.

Ah, riddle of things ! ah, great
Perpetual struggle and war !
The good which should be, inseparable,
From the evil things that are —
How shall I, with purblind vision,
arraign
The marvellous measures of joy and pain ?

Roll by then, brave dames, roll by ;
 You are part of a scheme, I trow.
 No more will I look with a covetous eye
 On your splendours of pomp and show ;
 For I see in your gorgeous chariots the strife,
 The problem, the wonder, the satire, of life.

LOSS AND GAIN.

FROM day to day, from year to year,
 New waves of change assail us here ;
 Each day, each year, prolongs the chain
 Where pleasure alternates with pain.

New earth-born exhalations rise,
 To hide the heavens from our eyes ;
 New clouds obscure the vision fair,
 Which once was round us everywhere.

New precious obligations come,
 New sanctities of love and home,
 New tender hopes, new anxious fears,
 And sweet experiences of tears.

Old tastes are lost, old thoughts grow strange,
 Old longings gradually change,
 Old faiths seem no more dear or true,
 Lost in the full light of the new.

Youth's boundless aspirations fled,
 And every wild ambition dead ;
 Love not a meteor blinding sight,
 But a pure ray of sober light.

And for the passionate self of old,
 A deep affection, calm, not cold ;
 A pitying love serenely kind,
 A broader trust, a juster mind,

A faith which occupies the heart,
 Tho' the brain halts to bear its part,
 Which threat and promise fail to move,
 Like the dim consciousness of love.

Tho' much be taken, much is left,
 Not all forsaken nor bereft ;
 From change on change we come to rest,
 And the last moment is the best.

SONG.

"ONLY a woman's hair,"
 A fair lock severed and dead ;
 But where is the maiden—where
 That delicate head ?

Perhaps she is rich and fair,
 Perhaps she is poor and worn,
 And 'twere better that one somewhere
 Had never been born.

And the careless hand that threw
 That faded tress away—
 Ah ! the false heart that once seened
 true,
 Ah ! love flung away.

THE APOLOGY.

I MAY not scorn, I cannot prize
 Those whose quick-coming fancies rise
 Only in quaint disguise—

Some trick of speech, or mien, or
 dress,
 Some obsolete uncomeliness,
 Some ancient wickedness.

Strange words antique for things not
strange,
Like broken tower and mould'ring
grange,
Made fair through time and change.

Legends of knight, and squire, and
dame,
With this our common life the same
In glory and in shame.

Mean lives and narrow aims which owe
The glamour and the charm they show
To that strange " Long ago ; "

Nay, meaner, lower than our own,
Because To-day is wider grown,
Knows deeper, and is known.

I doubt if anything there be
Which best thro' mask of chivalry,
Reveals myself to me ;

Myself, its yearnings and desires,
Its glimpses of supernal fires,
The something which aspires ;

Myself, the thing of blot and stain,
Which fallen, rises, falls again,
A mystery of pain ;

Myself, the toiler slow to earn,
The thinker sowing words that burn,
The sensuous in turn,

The vanquished, the disgraced, the
saint,
Now free as air, now bound and saint,
By everyday constraint.

Or, if too near the present lies
For common brains and common eyes
To probe its mysteries.

If feeble fancy fails to tear
The outer husk of fact, and bare
The seed to vital air,

But too extended, too immense,
Life's orb a vast circumference
Stretches for mortal sense ;

If simpler shows the past, more fair,
Set in a pure and luminous air,
Not dimmed by mists of care,

Seeming to breathe a lighter strain
Of lutes and lyres where none complain.
With undertones of pain ;—

If haply there we seem to view
Ourselves, behind a veil, yet true
The germ from which we grew ;

Not less our duty and our pride
Forbid to leave unsought, untried,
The glories at our side.

What ? shall the limner only paint
Blue hills with adumbrations faint,
Or misty aureoled saint,

And scorn to ponder flower or tree,
Ripe fields, child-faces, summer sea,
And all fair things that be ;

Nor care thro' passion's endless play,
Our living brethren to portray,
Who fare to doom to-day,

When the sun's finger deigns to trace
Each line and feature of man's face,
Its beauty and disgrace ?

Or shall the skilled musician dare
Only to sound some jocund air
Arcadian, free from care,

Round whom in strains that scorn
control

The mighty diapasons roll,
That speak from soul to soul ;

Our mystical modern music deep,
Not piped by shepherds to their sheep,
But wrung from souls that weep ;

Where seldom melody is heard,
Nor simple woodland note of bird,
So deep a depth is stirred,

Such blended harmonies divine
Across the core of sweetness twine
As round the grape the vine ?

Or shall some false cold dream of art
Corrupt the voice and chill the heart,
And turn us from our part,

Blot out the precious lesson won
From all the ages past and done,
That bard and seer are one ?

Dull creed of earthly souls ! who tell
That, be the song of heaven or hell,
Who truly sings, sings well,

And with the same encomiums greet
The satyr baring brutish feet,
And pure child-angels sweet ;

Whose praise in equal meed can share
The Mænad with distempered hair,
The cold Madonna fair.

Great singers of the past ! whose song
Still streams down earthward pure and
strong,
Free from all stain of wrong.

Whose lives were chequered, but whose
verse

The generations still rehearse ;
Yet never soul grew worse.

What is it that these would ? shall I,
Born late in time, consent to lie
In the old misery ?

I—who have learnt that flesh is dust,
What gulfs dissever love from lust,
The wrongful from the just—

Put on again the rags of sense,
A Pagan without innocence,
A Christian in offence ?

Perish the thought ! I am to-day
What God and Time have made me ;
they
Have ordered, I obey.

And day by day the labouring earth
Whirls on—glad mysteries of birth,
Sad death throes, sorrow, mirth,

Youth's flower just bursting into bloom,
Wan age, a sun which sets in gloom,
The cradle, and the tomb ;

These are around me—hope and fear,
Not fables, but alive and near,
Fresh smile and scarce-dried tear ;

These are around me, these I sing,
These, these of every thought and thing,
My verse shall heavenward wing.

The sun but seems to kiss the hill,
And all the vast eternal Will
Is moving, working, still

God is, Truth lives, and overhead
Behold a visible glory spread ;
Only the past is dead.

Courage ! arise ; if hard it seem
To sing the present, yet we deem
'Tis worthier than a dream.

Awake, arise, for to the bold
The seeming desert comes to hold
Blossoms of white and gold.

* * * * *
Shall I then choose to take my side
With those who love their thoughts to
hide
In vague abstractions wide ?

Whose dim verse struggles to recall
The hopes, the fears that rise and fall
Deep in the souls of all.

Who fitly choose a fitting theme,
Not things which neither are nor seem,
No visionary dream,

But the great psalm of life, the long
Harmonious confluence of song,
Thro' all the ages strong,

But grown to wider scale to-day,
And sweeping fuller chords than they
Knew who have passed away.

A worthy theme for worthy bard
But all too often blurred and marred
By intonations hard.

So that the common eye and ear
Can dimly see and faintly hear
What should be bright and clear.

Who wing the fiery thought so high,
An arrow shot into the sky,
Its failing forces die,

And all the straining eye discerns
Is but a spark which feebly burns,
Then quenched to earth returns.

Or with a borrowed lyre devote
Hoarse accent and untuneful throat
To sound a difficult note,

By currents of conflicting thought,
And counter themes which rise unsought,
And jangling chords distraught.

Not song, but science, sign not sound,
Not soaring to high heaven, but bound
Fast to the common ground.

Who with a pitiless skill dissect
What secret sources, vexed and checked,
Surge upward in effect,

And trace in endless struggling rhyme
How hearts forlorn of love and time
Have rotted into crime.

Or those who, baffled and oppress
By life's incessant fierce unrest,
Where naught that is seems best,

Assail the tyrant, lash the wrong,
Till but a wild invective long,
Is left in lieu of song.

Most precious all, yet this is sure,
The song which longest shall endure
Is simple, sweet, and pure.

Not psychologic riddles fine,
Not keen analysis, combine
In verse we feel divine.

Nor fierce o'erbalanced rage alone,
Which mars the rhyme, and dulls the
tone—
They may not sing who groan ;

But a sweet cadence, wanting much
Of depth, perhaps, and fire, but such
As finer souls can touch,

To finer issues ; such as come
To him who far afield must roam,
Thinking old thoughts of home.

Or who in Sabbath twilights hears
His children lisp a hymn, and fears
Lest they should see his tears.

* * * *

Wherefore, my soul, if song be thine,
If any gleam of things divine
Thro' thee may dimly shine,

If ever any faintest note
Of far-off sweetness swell thy throat,
True echo tho' remote,

This is my task, to sing To-day,
Not dead years past and fled away,
But this alone—To-day.

Or if I pause a little space
Striving, across the gulf, to trace
Some fine, forgotten face—

Some monarch of the race whose name
Still lives upon the lips of fame,
Touched by no stain of shame ;

Some sweet old love-tale, ever young,
Which of old time the burning tongue
Of god-like bard has sung ;

Some meed of effort nobly won,
Some more than human task begun,
Precious though left undone ;

Some awful story, strong to show
How passions unrestricted flow
Into a sea of woe ;

Not less my powers I strive to bend,
Not less my song aspires to tend
To one unchanging end,

By lofty aspirations, stirred
Thro' homely music, daily heard,
Trite phrase and common word,

Simple, but holding at the core
Thoughts which strange speech and
varied lore
Have hid from men before.

To lift how little howsoe'er
The hearts of toilers struggling here,
In joyless lives and sere.

To make a little lighter yet
Their lives by daily ills beset,
Whom men and laws forgot.

To sing, if sing I must, of love
As a pure spell, with power to move
Dull hearts to things above.

But choosing rather to portray
The warring tides of thought which
stray
Thro' doubting souls to-day.

Or if at times, with straining eye
And voice, I dwell on things which lie
Hidden in Futurity,

And strive to tell in halting rhyme
The glorious dawn, the golden prime.
The victories of Time,

The race transfigured, wrong redressed,
None worn with labour, nor oppressed,
But peace for all and rest,

And knowledge throwing wide the
shrine
From whose broad doorways seems to
shine
An effluence Divine ;—

If of these visions fain to dream,
Not less I hold, whate'er may seem,
The Present for my theme,

The vain regret remembering,
Which lost occasion knows to bring,—
Afraid, yet bound, to sing.

SONG.

AH ! love is like a tender flower
Hid in the opening leaves of life,
Which, when the springtide calls, has
power
To scorn the elemental strife—
So strong, that well it knows to gain
Fresh sweetness from the wind and rain.

So strong, and yet so weak, alas !
It waits the wooing of the sun ;
'Mid frosts and snows the brief hours
pass,
And when they melt the spring is done.
Gay blooms and honeyed fruits may
come,
But spring is dead, and birds are dumb.

AS IN A PICTURE.

WHITE, on a cliff they stood ;
Beyond, a cypress wood.

Three there were—one who wept,
And one as though he slept ;

One with wide steadfast eyes
Fixed in a sad surprise.

Day, like a dying hymn,
Grew gradually dim.

A solitary star
Gleaned on them from afar.

Beneath, by sand and cave
Sobbed the continual wave.

Long time in reverent thought
Who these might be I sought,

Then suddenly I said,
"Oh, Lord of quick and dead ! '

AT AN ALMSHOUSE.

BENEATH these shadows holy
Age rests, or paces slowly,
And muses, muses always
On that which once has been,
Recalling years long ended,
And vanished visions splendid ;
The throb, the flush of old days,
When all the world was green.

When every hour brought pleasure,
And every flower a treasure,
And whispered words were spoken,
And love was everywhere.
The swift brief hour of passion,
And then the old, old fashion,
The childish accents broken—
Oh, precious days and fair !

The years of self-denial,
Blissful tho' full of trial,
The young blooms waxing stronger,
The older come to fruit.

The tranquil days of gladness,
The gradual calm and sadness,
When childhood cheers no longer,
And all the house is mute.

Gone, but not wholly taken ;
Left, yet not all forsaken.
Again the worn hearts cherish
The memories of home ;
Again love-whispers greet them,
Their children run to meet them,
Blest dreams which never perish
Until the end be come.

A YORKSHIRE RIVER.

THE silent surfaces sleep
With a sullen viscous flow,
And scarce in the squalid deep
Swing the dead weeds to and fro,
And no living thing is there to swim or
creep
In the sunless gulfs below.

And beneath are the ooze and the
slime,
Where the corpse lies as it fell,
The hidden secrets of crime
Which no living tongue shall tell,
The shameful story of time,
The old, old burden of hell.

All the grasses upon the bank
Are bitter with scurf and drift,
And the reeds are withered and dank ;
And sometimes, when the smoke clouds
shift,
You may see the tall shafts in a hideous
rank
Their sulphurous fumes uplift.

From the black blot up the stream
The funeral barges glide,

And the waves part as in a dream,
From broad bow and sunken side ;
And 'tis "greed, greed ! " hisses from
coal and from steam,
Foul freightage and turbid tide,

Like the life of a slum'ring soul
Grown dull in content and health,
Whose dark depths lazily roll,
Whose still currents creep by stealth.
Nor sorrow nor yearning comes to
control
The monotonous tide of wealth.

Fair or foul, in life as in death,
One blight and corruption o'er all,
Blow on them, great wind, with thy
breath,
Fall, blinding water-floods, fall,
Till the dead life below awakeneth,
And deep unto deep doth call !

FOR JUDGMENT.

THE form was young, the face was
fair,
Her hands seemed still together tied,
'Twas as if Eve was standing there,
With the stern guardian at her side.

I mused on all the depths of will,
Of judgment, knowledge, right, and
wrong.
The pleadings crept their course, and
still
I sat in musings sad and long.

But when they ceased the tale of
shame,
And the cold voice pronounced her
name,
But one thought held me, that was all,
'Twas thus we did my sister call.

ODE ON A FAIR SPRING MORNING.

COME, friend, let us forget
The turmoil of the world a little while,
For now the soft skies smile,
With dew the flowers are wet.
Let us away awhile
With fierce unrest and carking thoughts
 of care,
And breathe a little while the jocund
 air,
And sing the joyous measures sung
By blither singers, when the world was
 young.

For still the world is young, for still
 the spring
Renews itself, and still the lengthening
 hours
Bring back the month of flowers ;
The leaves are green to-day as those of
 old,
For Chaucer and for Shakspeare ; still
 the gold
Of August gilds the rippling breadths
 of wheat ;
Young maids are fair and sweet
As when they frolicked gay, with flash-
 ing feet,
Round the old May-pole. All young
 things rejoice.
No sorrow dulls the blackbird's mellow
 voice,
Thro' the clear summer dawns or twi-
 lights long.
With aspect not more dim
Thro' space the planets swim
Than of old time o'er the Chaldean
 plain.
We only, we alone,
Let jarring discords mar our song.

And find our music take a lower tone.
We only with dim eyes
And laboured vision feebly strain,
And flout the undying splendours of
 the skies.

Oh, see how glorious show,
On this fair morn in May, the clear-cut
 hills,

The dewy lawns, the hawthorns white,
Argent on plains of gold, the growing
 light

Pure as when first on the young earth
The faint warm sunlight came to birth.
There is a nameless air
Of sweet renewal over all which fills
The earth and sky with life, and every-
 where,

Before the scarce seen sun begins to
 glow,

The birds awake which slumbered all
 night long,

And with a gush of song,
First doubting of their strain, then full
 and wide

Raise their fresh hymns thro' all the
 country side ;

Already, above the dewy clover,
The soaring lark begins to hover
Over his mate's low nest ;
And soon, from childhood's early rest
In hall and cottage, to the casement
 rise

The little ones with their fresh opened
 eyes.

And gaze on the old Earth, which still
 grows new,

And see the tranquil heaven's unclouded
 blue,

And, since as yet no sight nor sound of
 toil

The fair spread, peaceful picture comes
 to soil,

Look with their young and steadfast gaze
Fixed in such artless sweet amaze
As Adam knew, when first on either
hand
He saw the virgin landscapes of the
morning land.

Oh, youth, dawn, springtide, triune
miracle,
Renewing life in earth, and sky, and
man,
By what eternal plan
Dost thou revive again and yet again ?
There is no morn that breaks,
No bud that bursts, no life that comes
to birth,
But the rapt fancy takes,
Far from the duller plains of mind and
earth,
Up to the source and origin of things,
Where, poised on brooding wings,
it seems to hover o'er the immense
inane,
And see the suns, like feeble rings of
light,
Orb from the gray, and all the young-
ling globe
A coil of vapour circling like a dream,
Then fixed compact for ever ; the first
beam
Strike on the dark and undivided sea,
And wake the deeps with life. Oh,
mystery
That still dost baffle thought,
Though by all sages sought,
And yet art daily done
With each returning sun,
With every dawn which reddens in the
skies,
With every opening of awakened eyes !

How shall any dare to hold
that the fair world growing old,

Hath spent in vanished time
The glories of its prime ?
Beautiful were the days indeed
Of the Pagan's simple creed,
When all of life was made for girl and
boy,
And all religion was but to enjoy :
The fair chivalric dream
To some may glorious seem,
When from the sleeping centuries,
Awakened Europe seemed to rise ;
It may be that we cannot know,
In these ripe years, the glory and the
glow
Of those young hours of time, and
careless days,
Borne down too much by knowledge,
and oppress,
To halt a little for the needed rest,
And yield ourselves awhile to joy and
praise ;
Yet every year doth bring
With each recurrence of the genial hour
The infancy of spring,
With store of tender leaf and bursting
flower,
And still to every home
Fresh childish voices come,
And eyes that opened last in Paradise,
And with each rosy dawn
Are night and death withdrawn ;
Another world rises for other eyes ;
Again begins the joy, the stress, the
strife,
Ancient as time itself, and wide as life.

We are the ancients of the world
indeed ;
No more the simple creed,
When every hill and stream and grove
Was filled with shy divinities of love,
Allures us, serving as our King
A Lord of grief and suffering.

Too much our wisdom burdens to
permit
The fair, thin visions of the past, to flit
From shade to shade, or float from hill
to hill.
We are so compassed round by ill,
That all the music of our lives is
dumb,
Amid the turbulent waves of sound
that rise,
The discord born of doubts, and tears,
and sighs,
Which daily to the listening ear do
come;
Nay, oft, confounded by the incessant
noise
Of vast world-engines, grinding law on
law,
We lose the godhead that our fathers
saw,
And all our higher joys,
And bear to plod on daily, deaf and
blind,
To a dark goal we dare not hope to
find.

But grows the world then old ?
Nay, all things that are born of time
Spring upwards, and expand from youth
to prime,
Ripen from flower to fruit,
From song-tide till the days are mute,
Green blade to ear of gold.
But not the less through the eternal
round
The sleep of winter wakes in days of
spring,
And not the less the bare and frozen
ground
Grows blithe with blooms that burst
and birds that sing.
Nature is deathless ; herb and tree,
Through time that has been and shall be,

Change not, although the outward
form
Seem now the columned palm
Nourished in zones of calm,
And now the gnarled oak that defies
the storm.
The cedar's thousand summers are no
more
To her than are the fleeting petals gay
Which the young spring, ere March is
o'er,
Scarce offered, takes away.
Eternal are her works. Unchanging she,
Alike in short-lived flower and ever-
changing sea.

We, too, are deathless ; we,
Eternal as the Earth,
We cannot cease to be
While springtide comes or birth.
If our being cease to hold
Reflected lights divine
On budding lives, with every day they
shine
With unabated gold.
Though lost it may be to our mortal
sight,
It cannot be that any perish quite—
Only the baser part forgets to be.
And if within the hidden Treasury
Of the great Ruler we awhile should
rest,
To issue with a higher stamp impress,
With all our baser alloy purged and
spent,
Were we not thus content?

Our thoughts too mighty are
To be within our span of years con-
fined,
Too deep and wide and far,
The hopes, the fears, that crowd the
labouring mind,

The sorrows that oppress,
The sanctities that bless,
Are vaster than this petty stage of
things.
The soaring fancy mounts on careless
wings
Beyond the glimmer of the furthest
star.
The nightly watcher who with patient
eye
Scans the illumined sky,
Knows when the outward rushing fire
shall turn,
And in far ages hence shall brightly burn
For eyes to-day undreamt of. The
clear voice
From Greece or Israel thro' the cen-
turies heard
Still bids us tremble or rejoice,
Stronger than living look or word ;
The love of home or race,
Which doth transfigure us, and seems
to bring
On every heaven-lit face
Some shadow of the glory of our King,
Fades not on earth, nor with our years
doth end ;
Nay, even earth's poor physical powers
transcend
The narrow bounds of space and time,
The swift thought by some mystic sym-
pathy
Speeding through desert sand, and
storm-tost sea.
And shall we hold the range of mind
Is to our little lives confined ;
That the pure heart in some blest
sphere above,
Loves not which here was set on fire of
love ;
The clear eye scans not still, which
here could scan
The confines of the Universal plan ;

The seer nor speaks nor thinks his
thoughts sublime,
And all of Homer is a speck of lime ?

Nay, friend, let us forget
The conflicts of our doubt a little
while,
Again our springs shall smile ;
We shall not perish yet.
If God so guide our fate,
The nobler portions of ourselves shall
last
Till all the lower rounds of life be past,
And we, regenerate.
We too again shall rise,
The same and not the same,
As daily rise upon the orient skies
New dawns with wheels of flame.
So, if it worthy prove,
Our being, self-perfected, shall upward
move
To higher essence, and still higher
grown,
Not sweeping idle harps before a
throne,
Nor spending praise where is no need
of praise,
But through unnumbered lives and
ages come
From pure laborious days,
To an eternal home,
Where spring is not, nor birth, nor any
dawn,
But life's full noon tide never is with-
drawn.

LOVE TRIUMPHANT.

LOVE took me up, a naked, helpless
child,
Love laid me sleeping on the tender
breast,

Love gazed on me with saintly eyes
and mild,
Love watched me as I lay in happy rest,
Love was my childhood's stay, my
chiefest good,
My daily friend, my solace, and my
food.

But when to Love's own stature I was
come,
Treading the paths where fabled Loves
abound,
Hard by the Cytherean's magic home,
Loveless I paced alone the enchanted
ground.
Some phantoms pale I marked, which
fled away,
And lo, my youth was gone ; my hair
turned gray.

Loveless I lived long time, until I
knew
A thrill since childish hours unknown
before,
My cloistered heart forth to the wicket
flew,
And Love himself was waiting at the
door.
And now, how'er the treacherous
seasons move,
Love dwells with me again, and I with
Love.

Love folds me round, Love walks with
me, Love takes
My heart and burns it with a holy fire ;
Love lays me on his silver wings, and
makes
My fainting soul to thinner air aspire.
Love of the Source, the Race, the
True, the Right,
This is my sole companion day and
night.

TOLERANCE.

CALL no faith false which e'er has
brought
Relief to any laden life,
Cessation from the pain of thought,
Refreshment 'mid the dust of strife.

What though the thing to which they
kneel
Be dumb and dead as wood or stone,
Though all the rapture which they feel
Be for the worshipper alone ?

They worship, they adore, they bow
Before the Ineffable Source, before
The hidden soul of good ; and thou,
With all thy wit, what dost thou more ?

Kneel with them, only if there come
Some zealot or sleek knave who strives
To mar the sanctities of home,
To tear asunder wedded lives ;

Or who by subtle wile has sought,
By shameful promise, shameful threat,
To turn the thinker from his thought,
To efface the eternal landmarks set,

'Twixt faith and knowledge ; hold not
peace
For such, but like a sudden flame
Let loose thy scorn on him, nor cease
Till thou hast covered him with shame.

A HYMN IN TIME OF IDOLS.

THOUGH they may crowd
Rite upon rite, and mystic song on
song ;

Though the deep organ loud
 Through the long nave reverberate full
 and strong ;
 Though the weird priest,
 Whom rolling clouds of incense half
 conceal,
 By gilded robes increased,
 Mutter and sign, and proudly prostrate
 kneel ;
 Not pomp, nor song, nor bended
 knee
 Shall bring them any nearer Thee.

I would not hold
 Therefore that those who worship still
 where they,
 In dear dead days of old,
 Their distant sires, knelt once and
 passed away,
 May not from carven stone,
 High arching nave and reeded column
 fine,
 And the thin soaring tone
 Of the keen organ catch a breath
 divine,
 Or that the immemorial sense
 Of worship adds not reverence.

But by some bare
 Hill side or plain, or crowded city
 street,
 Wherever purer spirits are,
 hearts with love inflamed together
 meet,
 Rude bench and naked wall,
 Tumble and sordid to the world-
 dimmed sight,
 On these shall come to fall
 A golden ray of consecrating light,
 And thou within the midst shalt
 there
 nvisible receive the prayer.

In every home,
 Wherever there are loving hearts and
 mild,
 Thou still dost deign to come,
 Clothed with the likeness of a little
 child ;
 Upon the hearth thou still
 Dwellest with them at meat, or work,
 or play ;
 Thou who all space dost fill
 Art with the pure and humble day by
 day ;
 Thou treasurest the tears they weep,
 And watchest o'er them while they
 sleep.

Spirit and Word !
 That still art hid in every faithful heart,
 Indwelling Thought and Lord—
 How should they doubt who know thee
 as thou art ?
 How think to bring thee near
 By magic words, or signs, or any spell,
 Who art among us here,
 Who always in the loving soul dost
 dwell.
 Who art the staff and stay indeed
 Of the weak knees and hands that
 bleed ?

Then let them take
 Their pagan trappings, and their lifeless
 lore ;
 Arise O Lord and make
 A worthy temple where was none
 before.
 Each soul its own best shrine,
 Its priesthood, its sufficient sacrifice,
 Its cleansing fount divine,
 Its hidden store of precious sanctities.
 Those only fit for priestcraft are
 From whom their Lord and King is far.

ON A MODERN PAINTED WINDOW.

TIME was they listed thee so high
Between the gazer and the sky,
That all the worshipper might see
Was God no more, but only thee.

So high was set thy cross, that they
Who would thy every thought obey,
Saw not thy gracious face, nor heard
More than an echo of thy word.

But now 'tis nearer to the ground,
The weeping women kneel around,
The scoffers sneering by, deride
Thy kingly claims, thy wounded side.

Only two beams of common wood,
And a meek victim bathed in blood,
Rude nails that pierce the tortured limb,
Mild eyes with agony grown dim.

Aye, but to those who know thee right
Faith strengthens with the nearer sight ;
Love builds a deeper, stronger, creed
On those soft eyes and hands that bleed.

Raised but a little from the rest,
But higher therefore and more blest ;
No more an empty priestly sign,
But the more human, more divine.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT.

THE long day wanes, the broad fields
fade ; the night,
The sweet June night, is like a curtain
drawn.

The dark lanes know no faintest sound,
and white
The pallid hawthorn lights the smooth-
pleached lawn.
The scented earth drinks from the
silent skies
Soft dews, more sweet than softest
harmonies.

There is no stir nor breath of air, the
plains
Lie slumbering in the close embrace of
night,
Only the rustling landrail's note com-
plains ;
The children's easement shows the
half-veiled light,
Only beneath the solemn elm trees tall
The fountain seems to fall and cease to
fall.

No change will come, nor any sound
be made
Thro' the still hours which shall pre-
cede the day ;
Only the bright-eyed stars will slowly
fade,
And a thin vapour rise up cold and
gray,
Then a soft breeze will whisper fresh
and cold,
And up the swift sun hurries red as
gold.

And then another dawn, another link,
To bind the coming to the vanished
day,
Another foot-pace nearer to the brink
Whereon our perilous footsteps hardly
stay,
Another line upon the secular page
Of birth-throes, bridals, sick-beds,
youth and age.

Sweet summer night, than summer
days more fair,
Safe haven of the weary and forlorn,
Splendid the gifts the luminous noon-tides bear,
Lovely the opening eyelids of the morn ;
But thou with softest touch transfigur'est
This toilworn earth into a heaven of rest.

GOOD IN EVERYTHING.

THE white shafts of the dawn dispel
The night clouds banked across the sky ;
The sluggish vapours curl and die,
And the day rises. It is well.

Unfold, ye tender blooms of life ;
Sing, birds ; let all the world be gay :
'Tis well,—the morning of our day
Must rise 'mid joyous songs and strife.

Beat, noonday sun, till all the plain swoons, and life seems asleep or dead :
'Tis well,—the harvest of our bread Is sown in sorrow and reaped in pain.

Close, evening shadows, soft and deep, When life reviving breathes once more ;
Fall, silent night, when toil is o'er, And the soul folds her wings in sleep.

Come joy or grief, come right or wrong,
In good or evil, life or death ;
We are the creatures of His breath :
Nor shall his hand forsake us long.

THE REPLY.

IF I were to answer you
As you would, my soul would soar
Like the lark from earth-born eyes,
Soar and hide in far-off skies,
Soar and come to mortal view
Nevermore.

Whatsoever chance befall,
Of myself I'd die possest.
If they hold a willing mind
Silken threads like steel can bind.
Only to be free is blest—
Free is all.

Press me not, of earth am I ;
Paths there are I dare not tread.
Sweet are fields and flowers, the smile
Of girlhood ; but a little while
Blossoms youth, and overhead
Laughs the sky.

What have we to do with love,—
We for whom the seasons bring
Nothing else than golden hours,
Sun that burns, nor cloud that lowers,
Thro' whose veins the tides of spring
Lightly move ? .

But if any pain should come
To o'ercloud your summer, dear,
Pain another's heart may share,
Come and we our fate will dare,—
Come, forgetting doubt and fear,
To your home.

THE TOUCHSTONE.

SAID one, " 'Tis Use must lend
The clue our thoughts to bend
To the true end."

Then I. "But can your thought
Reach thus for ages sought,
The eternal 'Ought?'"

"Would not the martyr spurn
The truth you teach, to learn,
Rot, rather,--burn?"

"Were not death's self more sweet
Than to live incomplete
A life effete?"

Then he. "But who shall hold
They grasped not over bold
Their faith of old,"

"Hoarding a random creed
For which they bore to bleed,
Not proved indeed?"

"For who the truth shall seize
Grasps it by slow degrees,
Not snatched, as these."

"And who would save his kind
Must spend, the clue to find,
Not heart, but mind."

Then I. "But mind alone,
Is dead as wood or stone,
Stirs naught and none."

"And who with prying eyes
Will motive analyze,
For him it dies."

"And all his hours remain
A barren, endless plain,
Not joy nor pain :"

"A tideless, windless sea,
A blank eternity,
Still doomed to be."

Then he. "The Use we teach
All forms of being can reach,
Saves all by each."

"No hasty glance or blind,
To passing goods confined,
Changeful as wind ;"

"But with a steadfast view,
Piercing the boundless blue,
Up to the True."

"Contented to efface
Self, if from out its place
Blossoms the race ;"

"If from lives crushed and wrecked,
A perfected effect,
Man stands erect."

"To whom all pleasures show
An aspect mean and low
Beside to know."

"Holding all other thought
Than which for this is sought
A thing of naught."

"This seeking, nothing less,
What broader happiness
Most lives may bless?"

Then I. "If the desire
To which your thoughts aspire
Blazed forth afire ;"

"If all the task were done,
All stubborn contests won
Beneath the sun ;"

"If hope came not to cheer,
Nor bracing chill of fear,
Sweet sigh nor tear ;"

"But all the race should sleep
In a broad calm, too deep
For one to weep."

"And o'er all lands should reign
A dull content inane,
Worse far than pain ;"

"If, all its griefs forgot,
Slowly the race should rot,
Fade and be not ;"

"Would not the thought oppress
The dream that once could bless,
With such distress,"

"That, from the too great strain,
Life withered, heart and brain,
Would rise in vain ?"

Then he. "The outcome this
Of all philosophies,
'Who seeks shall miss.'"

"Who toil aright, for those
Life's pathway, ere it close,
Is as the rose."

"The spires of wisdom stand,
Piled by the unconscious hand,
From grains of sand."

"And pleasure comes unsought,
To those who take but thought
For that, they ought ;"

"A bloom, a perfume rare,
A deep-hid jewel fair
For those who dare."

"So who the race aright
Loveth, a clearer sight
Shall yet requite ;"

"And, since he seeks it less,
An unsought happiness
His toil shall bless."

Then I. "Twere strange indeed
Should not our longing need
A clearer creed."

"If only this were blest,
To ponder well how best
To serve the rest."

"Since grows ; 'tis understood,
The happy multitude,
From each man's good,"

"From general sacrifice,
How should for each arise,
Content for sighs ?"

"Or shall we deem it true
That who the road pursue
To gain the True,"

"May not the summit gain
By paths direct and plain
To heart and brain,"

"But with averted mind,
And sedulously blind,
The end must find ?"

"Is truth a masker, then,
Rejoiced to mock the ken
Of toiling men ?"

"Now tricked as Use, now Right,
But always in despite
Of our poor sight."

"Doth it not rather seem
We live, whate'er we deem,
As in a dream,"

" Acting, but acting still
The dictates to fulfil
Of a sure Will,"

" Seeing in Use and Right,
Twin rays indefinite
Of a great Light,"

" A mystic Sun and clear,
Which through mind's atmosphere
Can scarce appear,"

" But which not less we know ;
In all fair flowers that grow,
Loud storms that blow,"

" In noble thought and word,
In aspirations heard,
When hearts are stirred,"

" In every breathing breath,
Life that awaketh,
Life that is death,"

" Whether serene it shine
Or clouds our view confine,
Wondrous, Divine ? "

Then he. " Shall this excuse
Him who a dream should choose
Rather than Use,"

" That he prefer to hold
Some dark abstraction old,
Remote and cold,"

" Some thin ghost, fancy-dressed,
Whereby men's souls oppressed,
Forfeit the best,"

" And for a dream neglect
What splendours of effect
Their lives had decked ? "

Then I. " Though mind and brain
Wither and are in vain,
And thought a pain ; "

" Though sorrow, like a thief,
Follow to rob belief,
And faith be grief ; "

" Though my obedience show
No fruit I here may know
Save utter woe ; "

" Though health and strength decay ;
Yea, though the Truth shall slay,
I will obey."

NOTHING LOST.

WHERE are last year's snows,
Where the summer's rose,—
Who is there who knows ?

Or the glorious note .
Of some singer's throat,
Heard in years remote ?

Or the love they bore
Who, in days of yore,
Loved, but are no more ?

Or the faiths men knew
When, before mind grew,
All strange things seemed true ?

* * * * *
The snows are sweet spring rain,
The dead rose blooms again,
Young voices keep the strain.

The old affection mild
Still springs up undefiled
For love, and friend, and child.

The old-faiths grown more wide,
Purer and glorified,
Are still our lifelong guide.

Nothing that once has been,
Tho' ages roll between
And it be no more seen,

Can perish, for the Will
Which doth our being fulfil,
Sustains and keeps it still.

THE HIDDEN SELF.

I KNOW not if a keener smart
Can come to finer souls than his
Who hears men praise him, mind or
heart,
For something higher than he is.

Who fain would say, "Behold me,
friends,
That which I am, not what you deem,
A thing of low and narrow ends,
Sordid, not golden as I seem.

See here the hidden blot of shame,
The weak thought that you take for
strong,
The brain too dull to merit fame,
The faint and imitative song."

But dares not, lest discovery foul
Not his name only, but degrade
Heights closed but to the soaring soul,
Names which scorn trembles to in-
vade;

And doth his inner self conceal
From all men in his own despite,
Hiding what he would fain reveal,
. And a most innocent hypocrite.

MARCHING.

ONCE, and once again,
From the thick crowd of men,
Loud toil and high endeavour,
There comes a secret sound,
Where the thinkers stand around,
And sometimes 'tis "For ever,"
Sometimes "Never."

Always that ceaseless throng
Has filed those paths along,
Those painful hills ascended ;
Thro' fair meads of success,
Thro' barren sands they press,
Defeats and triumphs splendid,
Till 'tis ended.

The glory and the shame
Different, and yet the same
The efforts and the aspirations,
Unlike in mien and speech,
Pressed onwards each on each,
Go the endless alternations
Of the nations.

And the rhythm of their feet,
The ineffable low beat
Of those vast throngs pacing slowly,
Floats on the sea of Time
Like a musical low chime
From a far isle, mystic, holy,
Tolling slowly.

And from the endless column
Goes up that strange rhyme solemn
Of thoughts which naught shall sever,
The contrast sad and sweet,
Of opposite streams which meet ;
Sometimes the glad "For ever,"
Sometimes "Never."

COURAGE!

THERE are who, bending supple knees,
Live for no end except to please,
Rising to fame by mean degrees ;
But creep not thou with these.

They have their due reward ; they bend
Their lives to an unworthy end—
On empty aims the toil expend
Which had secured a friend.

But be not thou as these, whose mind
Is to the passing hour confined ;
Let no ignoble fetters bind
Thy soul, as free as wind.

Stand upright, speak thy thought, declare
The truth thou hast that all may share ;
Be bold, proclaim it everywhere :
They only live who dare.

GILBERT BECKETT AND THE FAIR SARACEN.

THE last crusader's helm had gleamed
Upon the yellow Syrian shore ;
No more the war-worn standards
streamed,
The stout knights charged and fell
no more ;
No more the Paynim grew afraid—
The crescent floated o'er the cross.
But to one simple Heathen maid
Her country's gain was bitter loss ;

For love, which knows not race or creed,
Had bound her with its subtle
chain,—

Love, which still makes young hearts
to bleed,

For this one, mingled joy with pain,
And left for one brief hour of bliss,
One little span of hopes and fears,
The memory of a parting kiss,
And what poor solace comes of tears.

A lowly English squire was he,
A prisoner chained, enslaved, and
sold ;

A lady she of high degree,
'Tis an old tale and often told :
'Twas pity bade the brown cheek glow,
'Twas love and pity drew the sigh,
'Twas love that made the soft tear flow,
The sweet sad night she bade him fly.

Far from the scorching Syrian plain
The brave ship bears the Saxon home ;
Once more to mists and rains again,
And verdant English lawns, they come.
I know not if as now 'twas then,
Or if the growing ages move
The careless, changeful hearts of men
More slowly to the thoughts of love ;

But woman's heart was then, as now,
Tender and passionate and true.
Think, gentle ladies, ye who know
Love's power, what pain that poor
heart knew ;
How, living always o'er again
The sweet short past, she knew, too
late,
'Twas love had bound the captive's
chain,
Which broken, left her desolate.

Till by degrees the full young cheek
Grew hollow, and the liquid eyes
Still gazing seaward, large and meek,
Took something of a sad surprise ;

As one who learns, with a strange chill,
 'Mid youth and wealth's unclouded
 day,
 Of sad lives full of pain and ill,
 And thinks, "And am I too as
 they?"

And by degrees most hateful grew
 All things that once she held so
 dear—
 The feathery palms, the cloudless blue,
 Tall mosque and loud muezzin clear,
 The knights who flashed by blinded
 street,
 The lattice lit by laughing eyes,
 The songs around the fountain, sweet
 To maidens under Eastern skies.

—And oft at eve, when young girls told
 Tales precious to the girlish heart,
 She sat alone, and loved to hold
 Communion with her soul apart.
 Till at the last, too great became
 The hidden weight of secret care,
 And girlish fears and maiden shame
 Were gone, and only love was there.

And so she fled. I see her still
 In fancy, desolate, alone,
 Wander by arid plain and hill,
 From early dawn till day was done;
 Sun-stricken, hungry, thirsty, faint,
 By perilous paths I see her move,
 Clothed round with pureness like a
 saint,
 And fearless in the might of love.

Till lo ! a gleam of azure sea,
 And rude ships moored upon the
 shore.
 Strange, yet not wholly strange, for he
 Had dared those mystic depths
 before.

And some good English seaman bold,
 Remembering those he left at home,
 Put gently back the offered gold,
 And for love's honour bade her come.

And then they sailed. No pirate bark
 Swooped on them, for the Power of
 Love
 Watched o'er that precious wandering
 ark,
 And this his tender little dove.
 I see those stalwart seamen still
 Gaze wondering on that childish form,
 And shelter her from harm and ill,
 And guide her safe through wave
 and storm.

Till under grayer skies a gleam
 Of white, and taking land she went,
 Following our broad imperial stream,
 Or rose-hung lanes of smiling Kent.
 Friendless I see her, lonely, weak,
 Thro' fields where every flower was
 strange,
 Go forth without a word to speak,
 By burgh and thorp and moated
 grange.

For all that Love himself could teach
 This passionate pilgrim to our shore,
 Were but two words of Saxon speech,
 Two little words and nothing more—
 "Gilbert" and "London"; like a
 flame
 To her sweet lips these sounds would
 come,
 The syllables of her lover's name,
 And the far city of his home.

I see her cool her weary feet
 In dewy depths of crested grass;
 By clear brooks fringed with meadow-
 sweet,
 And daisied meads, I see her pass;

I see her innocent girlish glee,
I see the doubts which on her crowd,
O'erjoyed with bird, or flower, or tree,
Despondent for the fleeting cloud.

I see her passing slow, alone,
By burgh and thorp and moated
grange,
Still murmuring softly like a moan
Those two brief words in accents
strange.

Sometimes would pass a belted earl
With squires behind in brave array ;
Sometimes some honest, toilworn churl
Would fare with her till close of day.

The saintly abbess, sweet and sage,
Would wonder as she ambled by,
Or white-plumed knight or long-haired
page
Ride by her with inquiring eye.
The friar would cross himself, and say
His paternosters o'er and o'er ;
The gay dames whisper Welladay !
And pity her and nothing more.

But tender women, knowing love
And all the pain of loneliness,
Would feel a sweet compassion move,
And welcome her to rest and food,
And walk with her beyond the hill,
And kiss her cheek when she must go ;
And "Gilbert" she would murmur still,
And "London" she would whisper
low.

And sometimes sottish boors would rise
From wayside tavern, where they
sate,
And leer from heated vinous eyes,
And stagger forth with reeling gait,

And from that strong unswerving will
And clear gaze shrink as from a
blow ;
And "Gilbert" she would murmur still,
And "London" she would whisper
low.

Then by the broad suburban street,
And city groups that outward stray
To take the evening, and the sweet
Faint breathings of the dying day—
The gay young 'prentice, lithe and slim,
The wimpled maid, demurely shy,
The merchant somewhat grave and
prim,
The courtier with his rolling eye.

And more and more the growing crowd
Would gather, wondering whence she
came
And why, with boorish laughter loud,
And jeers which burnt her cheek
with flame.
For potent charm to save from ill
But one word she made answer now :
For "Gilbert" she would murmur still,
And "Gilbert" she would whisper
low.

Till some good pitiful soul—not then
Our London was as now o'ergrown—
Pressed through the idle throng of men,
And led her to his home alone,
And signing to her he would find
Him whom she sought, went forth
again
And left her there with heart and mind
Distracted by a new-born pain.

For surely then, when doubt was o'er,
A doubt before a stranger came,
"He loved me not, or loves no more."
Oh, virgin pride ! oh, maiden shame !

Almost she fled, almost the past
Seemed better than the pain she
knew;

Her veil around her face she cast :
Then the gate swung—and he was
true.

Poor child ! they christened her, and so
She had her wish. Ah, yearning
heart,
Was love so sweet then ? would you
know

Again the longing and the smart ?
Came there no wintry hours when you
Longed for your native skies again,
The creed, the tongue your girlhood
knew,

Aye, even the longing and the pain ?
Peace ! Love is Lord of all. But I,
Seeing her fierce son's mitred tomb,
Conjoin with fancy's dreaming eye
This love tale, and that dreadful
doom.

Sped hither by a hidden will,
O'er sea and land I watch her go ;
" Gilbert " I hear her murmur still,
And " London " still she whispers
low.

TO A CHILD OF FANCY.

THE nests are in the hedgerows,
The lambs are on the grass ;
With laughter sweet as music
Thy hours lightfooted pass,
My darling child of fancy,
My winsome Prattling lass.

Blue eyes, with long brown lashes,
Thickets of golden curl,
Red little lips disclosing
Twin rows of fairy pearl,

Cheeks like the apple blossom,
Voice lightsome as the merle.

A whole Spring's fickle changes
In every short-lived day,
A passing cloud of April,
A flowery smile of May,
A thousand quick mutations
From graver moods to gay.

Far off, I see the season
When thy childhood's course is run,
And thy girlhood opens wider
Beneath the growing sun,
And the rose begins to redden,
But the violets are done.

And further still the summer,
When thy fair tree, fully grown,
Shall burgeon, and grow splendid
With blossoms of its own,
And the fruit begins to gather,
But the buttercups are mown.

If I should see thy autumn,
'Twill not be close at hand,
But with a spirit vision,
From some far distant land.
Or, perhaps, I hence may see thee
Amongst the angels stand.

I know not what of fortune
The future holds for thee,
Nor if skies fair or clouded
Wait thee in days to be,
But neither joy nor sorrow
Shall sever thee from me.

Dear child, whatever changes
Across our lives may pass,
I shall see thee still for ever,
Clearly as in a glass,
The same sweet child of fancy,
The same dear winsome lass.

A CYNIC'S DAY-DREAM.

SOME men there be who can descry
No charm in earth or sea or sky,
Poor painful bigot souls, to whom
All sights and sounds recall the tomb,
And some who do not fear to use
God's world for tavern or for stews.
Some think it wisdom to despoil
Their years for gold and troublous toil ;
While others with cold dreams of art
Would feed the hunger of the heart,
And dilettanti dare to stand,
Eternities on either hand !

But with no one of these shall I
Make choice to live my life or die,—
Rather let me elect to give
What span of life is mine to live,
To honest labour, daily sought,
Crowned with the meed of patient
thought ;
To precious friends for ages dead,
But loved where'er their words are
read ;
To others living with us still,
Who sway the nation's mind and will
By eloquent pen or burning word,
Where hearts are fired and souls are
stirred.
So thro' the tranquil evenings long,
Let us awake our souls with song,
Such song as comes where no words
come,
And is most mighty when most dumb.
Then soar awhile on wings of art ;
Not that which chokes the vulgar maw,
But subtle hints and fancies fine,
When least completed most divine,—
Sun-copies of some perfect thought,
Thro' bronze or canvas fitly wrought,
Known when in youth 'twas ours to see
Thy treasure-houses, Italy !

Then turn from these to grave debate
What change of laws befits the State,
By what wise schemes and precepts best
To raise the humble and oppressed,
And slay the twin reproach of Time,
The fiends of Ignorance and Crime.

Or what if I might come to fill
A calmer part, and dearer still,
With one attempered soul to share
The joys and ills 'tis ours to bear ;
To grow together, heart with heart,
Into a whole where each is part ;
To blend together, soul with soul,
Neither a part, but each the whole ;
With strange creative thrills to teach
The dawning mind, the growing speech,
To bind around me precious hands
Of loving hearts and childish hands,
And lose the stains of time and sense
In those clear deeps of innocence ?

So if kind fate should grant at length,
Ere frame and brain have lost their
strength,
In my own country homestead dear,
To spend a portion of the year ;
What joys I'll prove if modest wealth
Should come with still unbroken health !
There, sheltered from the ruder wind,
Thro' the thick woods we'll range, to
find
The spring's first flower, the autumn's
fruit,
Strange fungus or misshapen root.
Mark where the wood-quist or the
thrush
Builds on tall pine or hazel bush ;
See the brave bird with speckled breast
Brood fearless on the teeming nest,
And bid the little hands refrain
From every act of wrong and pain.

Observe the gossip conies sit
 By their own doors, the white owl flit
 Thro' the dim fields, while I enjoy
 The wondering talk of girl or boy.
 Sweet souls, which at life's portal
 stand,
 And all within, a wonderland—
 Oh, treasure of a guileless love,
 Fit prelude of the joys above !

There, when the swift week nears its
 end,
 To greet the welcome Sunday friend,
 Through the still fields we'll wend our
 way,
 To meet the guest at close of day.
 And then, when little eyes in vain
 Long time have sought the coming
 train,
 A gradual distant sound, which fills
 The bosom of the folded hills,
 Till with white steam or ruddy light
 The wayworn convoy leaps to sight,
 Then stops and sets the traveller down,
 Bringing the smoke and news of town.
 And then the happy hours to come,
 The walk or ride which leads us home,
 Past the tall woods through which
 'twould seem

Home's white walls hospitably gleam,—
 The well-served meal, the neighbour
 guest,
 The rosy darlings curled and dressed ;
 And, when the house grows silent, then
 The lengthened talk on books and
 men ;
 And on the Sunday morning still,
 The pleasant stroll by wood-crowned
 hill

To church, wherein my eyes grow dim
 Hearing my children chant the hymn ;
 And seeing in their earnest look
 Something of innocent rebuke,

I lose the old doubt's endless pain,
 And am a little child again.

If fate should grant me such a home,
 So sweet the tranquil days would come,
 I should not need, I trust, to sink
 My weariness in lust or drink.
 Scant pleasure shoult I think to gain
 From endless scenes of death and pain ;
 'Twould little profit me to slay
 A thousand innocents a day ;
 I should not much delight to tear
 With wolfish dogs the shrieking hare ;
 With horse and hound to track to
 death
 A helpless wretch that gasps for breath ;
 To make the fair bird check its wing,
 And drop, a dying, shapeless thing ;
 To leave the joy of all the wood
 A mangled heap of fur and blood,
 Or else escaping, but in vain,
 To pine, a shattered wretch, in pain :
 Teeming, perhaps, or doomed to see
 Its young brood starve in misery ;
 With neither risk nor labour, still
 To live for nothing but to kill—
 I dare not ! If perplexed I am
 Between the tiger and the lamb ;
 If fate ordain that these shall give
 Their poor brief lives that I may live :
 Whate'er the law that bids them die,
 Others shall butcher them, not I,—
 Not such my work. Surely the Lord,
 Who made the devils by a word,
 Not men, but those who'd wield them
 well
 Gave these sad tortures of his Hell.

Ah ! fool and blind, to wander so ;
 Who hast lived long enough to know
 With what insane confusions teem
 The mazes of our waking dream,—

The dullard surfeited with gold
His bloated coffers fail to hold,
While the keen mind and generous
 brain

From penury aspire in vain ;
Love's choicest treasures flung away
On some vile lump of coarsest clay ;
P're girlhood chained to wretches foul,
Tainted in body as in soul ;
The precious love of wife or child
Not for the loving heart and mild,
But for the sullen churl, who ne'er
Knew any rule but that of fear ;
Fame, like Titania, stooping down
To set on asses' ears a crown ;
The shallow dunce, the fluent fool,
The butt and laughter of the school,
By fortune's strange caprice grown
 great,
A light of forum or debate ;
The carnal lump devoid of grace,
With each bad passion in his face,
A saintly idol, round whose knees
Crowd throngs of burning devotees.

Great heaven ! how strange the tangle is,
What old perplexity is this ?
The very words of my complaint,
What else are they than echoes faint
Of the full fire, the passionate scorn,
Of high-souled singers and forlorn,
Who, in our younger England, knew
No care for aught but what was true,
But loved to lash with bitter hate
The shameless vices of the great ;
Who bade, in far-off days of Rome,
In verse their indignation come ;
Who, when we learn the secrets hid
Beneath the eldest Pyramid,
Or in those dim days further still,
Whose nameless ruin builds the hill,
Push back our search where'er we can,
Till first the ape became the man,

Will in rude satire bid us find
The earhest victories of mind ?
Strong souls, rebellious with their lot,
Who longed for right and found it not ;
Too strong to take things as they seem,
Too weak to comprehend the scheme,
Too deeply fired with honest trust
To dream that God might be unjust ;
Yet, seeing how unequal show
His providences here below,
By paradoxes girt about,
Grew thro' excess of faith to doubt.
Oh, faithful souls, who love the true,
Tho' all be false, yet will not you ;
Tho' wrong shall overcome the right,
Still is it hateful in your sight ;
Tho' sorely tempted, you, and tried,
The truth stands always at your side ;
Tho' falsehood wear her blandest smile,
You only she shall ne'er beguile ;
For you, 'mid spectral sights and shows,
Life blushes with a hidden rose ;
Thro' the loud din of lower things
You hear the sweep of angel wings,
And with a holy scorn possest,
Wait till these clamours sink to rest.

COLD snowdrops which the shrinking
 new-Lorn year
Sends like the dove from out the
 storm-tost ark ;
Sweet violets which may not tarry here
 Beyond the earliest flutings of the
 lark ;

Bright celandines which gild the tufted
 brake
Before the speckled thrush her nest
 has made ;

Fair frail anemones which star-like shake
And twinkle by each sunny bank and
glade ;

Pale primroses wherewith the virgin
spring,

As with a garland, wreathes her
comely head ;

No eyes have I for you, nor voice to
sing.

My love is dead !

For she was young and pure and white
as you,

And fairer and more sweet, and ah !
as frail.

I dare not give to her the honour due,
Lest, for a strain so high, my voice
should fail.

Like you, she knew the springtide's
changeful hours ;

Like you, she blossomed ere the
coming leaf ;

Like you, she knew not summer's teem-
ing showers ;

Like you, as comely, and, alas ! as
brief.

You may not see the roses, nor might
she ;

Such swift short beauty is its only
fruit ;

So a sweet silence is her eulogy,
And praise is mute.

IN MEMORY OF A FRIEND.*

BENEATH the feathery fronds of palm
The white stone of a double grave,
And on the horizon, blue and calm,
The tropic ocean wave.

* Ernest Schalch, Attorney-General for Jamaica, who, with his only sister, died of yellow fever in February, 1874.

'Twas three years since, no more, that
thou,
Dear friend, with us, in daily round,
Didst labour where we labour now,
'Mid London's surge of sound.

Treading the dull slow paths of law,
With little of reward or gain,
To feel a high ambition gnaw
Thy heart with tooth of pain,

And mark with scant content the crowd
Fulfil the immemorial rule
Which drives the fool with plaudits
loud
To glorify the fool.

And so with patient scorn didst gain
To winnow from the growing heap
Of barren precedent the grain
Which hides there buried deep.

Till last, congenial labour came,
To call thee o'er the tropic sea,
And exile, gilt by toil and fame,
Severed thy friends from thee.

Brief as we hoped, but ah, how long !
Though lit by news of days well spent,
Of rights defined, of law made strong,
Of rebels grown content,

Of ordered codes so reasoned out,
Speaking with voice so true and clear,
That none who hear them still may
doubt
“ ‘Tis Justice speaketh here.”

Yet not the less thou barest part
In the old talk we loved before ;
The newest growths of thought or art
Delighted more and more,

And all the marvels of thy isle,
The lavish wealth of sea and land,
The skies with their too constant smile,
Loud surf on breathless strand,

The shallow nature fierce, yet gay,
Of our dark brethren ; thou didst learn,
Noting—but gazing, far away,
With eyes that still would yearn,

For that fair time when, toil being
done,

The happy day at length should come,
When with our kindly autumn sun
Thou should'st revisit home.

* * * * *
It was this very year ; and then
The plague, which long time, dealing
death,

I had vexed the shores of kindred men,
On those breathed deadly breath.

And one, I know not who, their guest,
Sickening, Love drew them forth to
tend,

Careless of needful food and rest,
Their fever-stricken friend,

Who owed to them life's refluent
power ;

While for those duteous martyrs twain,
Brother and Sister, one blest hour
Brought one release from pain.

Too generous natures ! kindred souls !—
And now, round those twin tombs the
wave,

Forgetful of their story, rolls,
And the palms shade their grave.

* * * * *
And we—what shall we say of thee ?—
Thou hast thy due reward, oh, friend—
We serve a High Necessity,
To an Invisible End.

That waste nor halting comes at all
In all the scheme is all we know ;
The force was formed that bade thee
fall,
Millions of years ago.

The clouds of circumstance unite,
The winds of fate together roll ;
They meet ; there bursts a sudden light,
And consecrates a soul !

IT SHALL BE WELL.

If thou shalt be in heart a child,
Forgiving, tender, meek, and mild,
Though with light stains of earth
desiled,
Oh, soul, it shall be well.

It shall be well with thee indeed,
Whate'er thy race, thy tongue, thy
creed ;
Thou shalt not lose thy fitting meed.
It shall be surely well.

Not where, nor how, nor when we
know,
Nor by what stages thou shalt grow ;
We may but whisper faint and low,
“ It shall be surely well.”

It shall be well with thee, oh, soul,
Tho' the heavens wither like a scroll ;
Tho' sun and moon forget to roll,
Oh, soul, it shall be well.

A REMONSTRANCE.

If ever, for a passing day,
My careless rhymes shall gain to please,
I would that those who read may say,
“ Left he no more than these ?”

For sure it is a piteous thing
That those blest souls to whom is given
The instinct and the power to sing,
The choicest gift of heaven,

'ot from high peak to peak alone
Our faithful footsteps care to guide,
But oft by plains of sand and stone,
Dull wastes, and naught beside.

Who the low crawling verse prolong,
Careless alike of fame and time ;
The form, but not the soul of song--
A dreary hum of rhyme.

A straight road, by a stagnant strain,
Where the winged steed, which late
would soar
From the white summits like a dream,
Creeps slowly evermore.

A babble of sound, like that flat noise
Which, when the harmonies grow
dumb,
Between the symphony's awful joys,
Too oft is heard to come.

Grave error ; since not all of life
Is rhythmic ; oft by level ways
We walk ; the sweet creative strife,
The inspired heroic days,

Are rare for all,—no food for song,
Are common hours ; and those who
hold
The gift, the inspiration strong,
More precious far than gold,

Only when heart is fired and brain,
And the soul spreads its soaring wing,
Only when nobler themes constrain,
Should ever dare to sing.

THIRD SERIES (1875).

SONG.

TELL me where I may quench the too
fierce fire
Of hope and of desire ;
Tell me how I may from my soul remove
The sting and pain of love ;
Tell me, and I will give to thee,
Magician, my whole soul in fee.

And yet I know not what of fit reward,
For enterprise so hard,
I might convey thee in a loveless soul,
Whose currents no more roll :
A corpse, corruptible and cold,
Were no great prize to have and hold.

Time only is it that will deign to take
Such things for their own sake,

Preferring age to youth, grey hairs to
brown,
And to bright smiles the frown.
Time takes the hope, Time dulls the
smart,
And first makes slow, then stops the
heart.

Wherefore to Time I will address my
song.
Time, equable and strong,
Take thou all hope and longing clean
away—
And yet I prithee stay ;
Forbear, for rather I would be
Consumed than turn to ice with
thee.

THE HOME ALTAR.

Why should we seek at all to gain
By vigils, and in pain,
By lonely life and empty heart,
To set a soul apart
Within a cloistered cell,
For whom the precious, homely hearth
would serve as well?

There, with the early breaking
morn,
Ere quite the day is born,
The lustral waters flow serene,
And each again grows clean ;
From sleep, as from a tomb,
Born to another dawn of joy, and hope,
and doom.

There through the sweet and toil-
some day,
To labour is to pray ;
There love with kindly beaming
eyes
Prepares the sacrifice ;
And voice and innocent smile
Of childhood do our cheerful liturgies
beguile.

There, at his chaste and frugal
feast,
Love sitteth as a Priest ;
And with mild eyes and mien
sedate,
His deacons stand and wait ;
And round the holy table
Patens and chalice range in order
serviceable.

And when ere night, the vespers
said,
Low lies each weary head,

What giveth He who gives them
sleep,
But a brief death less deep ?
Or what the fair dreams given
But ours who, daily dying, dream a
happier heaven ?

Then not within a cloistered wall
Will we expend our days ;
But dawns that break and eves
that fall
Shall bring their dues of praise.
This best befits a Ruler always
near,
This dutious worship mild, and reasonable
fear.

THE VOYAGE.

Who climbs the Equatorial main
Drives on long time through mist and
cloud,
Through zones of storm, through thun-
ders loud,
For many a night of fear and pain.

Till one night all is clear, and lo !
He sees with wondering, awe-struck
eyes,

In depths above, in depths below,
Strange constellations light the skies—

New stars, more splendid and more fair,
Yet not without a secret loss :
He seeks in vain the Northern Bear,
And finds instead the Southern Cross.

Yet dawns the self-same sun—the same
The deep below the keel which lies ;
Though this may burn with brighter
flame,
And that respond to bluer skies,

The self-same earth, the self-same sky :
And though through clouds and tem-
pests driven,

The self-same seeker lifts an eye
That sees another side of heaven.

No change in man, or earth, or aught,
Save those strange secrets of the night :
Nor there, save that another thought
Has reached them through another sight,

Which may but know one hemisphere,
The earth's mass blotting out the blue,
Till one day, leaving shadows here,
It sees all heaven before its view.

THE FOOD OF SONG.

How best doth vision come
To the poet's mind,—

Lonely beneath the blue, unclouded
dome,
Or battling with the mighty ocean-wind ;
In fair spring mornings, with the soar-
ing lark,

Or amid roaring midnight forests dark ?

Shall he attune his voice
To sweetest song,
When earth and sea and sky alike
rejoice,
And men are blest, and think no
thought of wrong,
In some ideal heaven, some happy isle,
Where life is stiffened to a changeless
smile ?

Or best amid the noise
Of high designs,
Loud onsets, shatterings, awful battle
joys,
Wherefor the loftier spirit longs and
pines ;

Or by the depths of Thought's un-
fathomed sea ;
Or to loud thunders of the Dawn to be ?

Nature is less than naught
In smile or frown,
But for the formless, underlying thought
Of mind and purpose greater than our
own ;
This only can these empty shows
inform,
Smiles through the calm, and animates
the storm.

Nor 'mid the clang and rush
Of mightier thought,
The steeps, the snows, the gulfs, that
whelm and crush
The seeker with the treasure he has
sought ;
Too vast, too swift, too formless to
inspire
The fictive hand, or touch the lips with
fire.

Rather amid the throng
Of toiling men
He finds the food and sustenance of
song,
Spread by hidden hands, again, and
yet again,
Where'er he goes, by crowded city
street,
He fares thro' springing fancies sad
and sweet—

Some innocent baby smile ;
A close-wound waist ;
Fathers and children ; things of shame
and guile ;
Dim eyes, and lips at parting kissed in
haste ;

The halt, the blind, the prosperous
thing of ill ;
The thief, the wanton, touch and vex
him still.

Or if sometimes he turn
With a new thrill,
And strives to paint anew with words
that burn
The inner thought of sea, or sky, or
hill :
It is because a breath of human life
Has touched them : joy and suffering,
rest and strife.

And he sees mysteries
Above, around,
Fair spiritual fleeting agencies
Haunting each foot of consecrated
ground :
And so, these fading, raises bolder eyes
Beyond the furthest limits of the skies,

And every thought and word,
And all things seen,
And every passion which his heart has
stirred,
And every joy and sorrow which has
been,
And every step of life his feet have
trod,
Lead by broad stairs of glory up to
God.

THE YOUTH OF THOUGHT.

Oh happy days ! oh joyous time !
When thought was gay and man was
young,
And to a golden flow of rhyme,
Life like a melody was sung ;

When, in the springtime of the earth,
The cloud-capt hill, the dewy grove,
Clear lake and rippling stream gave
birth
To shy Divinities of love ;

When often to the jovial feast
Of love or wine the people came,
And Nature was the only priest,
And Youth and Pleasure knew not
shame.

Nor darker shape of wrong or ill
The fearful fancy might inspire,
Than vine-crowned on some shady hill,
The Satyr nursing quaint desire.

And if some blooming youth or maid
In depths of wood or stream were
lost,
Some love-lorn Deity, 'twas said,
The blissful truant's path had crossed.

Sweet time of fancy, giving place
To times of thinking scarce less
blest,
When Wisdom wore a smiling face,
And Knowledge was like Fancy
drest,

And Art with Language lived ingrown,
The cunning hand and golden
tongue :
By this the form Divine was shown,
By that its deathless praises sung.

When in cool temples fair and white,
By purple sea, or myrtle shade,
The gods took shape to mortal sight,
By their own creatures' hands re-
made.

And daily, to the cheerful noise
Of wrestling, or the panting race—
Mid the clear laughter of the boys,
And tender forms of youthful grace—

Grave sages walked in high debate
Beneath the laurel grove, and sought
To solve the mysteries of Fate,
And sound the lowest deeps of
Thought ;

Nor knew that they, as those indeed,
Were naked, taking fair for right ;
With beauty only for all creed,
Yet not without some heaven-sent
light.

Now preaching clear the deathless
soul ;
Now winging love from sloughs of
shame ;
And oft from earthly vapours foul,
Soaring aloft with tongues of flame.

Knew they no inward voice to vex
The careless joyance of their way—
No pointing finger stern, which checks
The sad transgressor of to-day ?

Fair dream, if any dream be fair,
Which knows no fuller life than
thine ;
Which only moves through earthly air,
And builds on shadows half divine ;

How art thou fled ! For us no more
Dryad or Satyr haunts the grove ;
No Nereid sports upon the shore,
Nor with wreathed horn the Tritons
rove ;

Who breathe a fuller, graver air,
Long since to manhood's stature
grown ;

Who leave our childhood's fancies fair,
For pains and pleasures of our own.

For us no more the young vine climbs,
Its gadding tendrils flinging down ;
Who move in sadder, wiser times,
Whose thorns are woven for a
crown.

The lily and the passion-flower
Preach a new tale of gain and loss,
And in the wood-nymph's closest bower
The springing branches form the
Cross.

"A great hope traversing the earth,"
Has taken all the young world's
bloom,
And for the joy and flush of birth,
Has left the solemn thought of
doom ;

And made the body no more divine,
And built our Heaven no longer
here,
And given for joyous fancies fine,
Souls bowed with holy awe and fear.

And far beyond the suns, removed
The godhead seen by younger eyes,
Leaving the people once beloved,
Girt round by dreadful mysteries ;

Fulfilled with thoughts, more fair and
dear
Than all the lighter joys of yore,
Immeasurable hopes brought near,
And Heaven laid open more and
more.

But not with love and peace alone
Time came, which older joys could
take ;

But with fierce brand and hopeless groan,
Red war, the dungeon, and the stake ;

And lives by Heaven too much opprest,
And cloisters dim with tears and sighs,
And young hearts withered in the breast,
And fasts and stripes and agonies ;

And for Apollo breathing strength,
And Aphrodité warm with life ;
A tortured Martyr come at length,
To the last pang of lifelong strife.

While round us daily move no more
Those perfect forms of youthful grace,
No more men worship as before
The rounded limb, the clear-cut face ;

Who see the dwarfed mechanic creep,
With hollow cheek, and lungs that bleed,
Or the swart savage fathom-deep,
Who comes to air, to sleep, and breed.

Aye, but by loom, or forge, or mine,
Or squalid hut, there breaks for these
Hope more immense, awe more divine
Than ever dawned on Sokrates.

Who if they seek to live again
In careless lives the pagan charm,
May only prove a lifelong pain,
For that clear conscience void of harm.

For in the manhood of God's days
We live, and not in careless youth ;

The essence more than form we praise,
And Beauty moves us less than Truth.

From youth to age ; till cycles hence
Another and a higher Spring,
And with a truer innocence,
Again the world shall think and sing.

SONG.

I WOULD thou might'st not vex me
with thine eyes,
Thou fair Ideal Beauty, nor would'st
shame
All lower thoughts and visions as they
rise,
As in mid-noon a flame.

For now thy presence leaves no prospect
fair,
Nor joy in act, nor charm in any maid,
Nor end to be desired, for which men
dare,
Thou making me afraid.

Because life seems through thee a thing
too great
To spend on these, which else might
grow to thee ;
So that fast bound, I idly hesitate :
I prithee set me free ;

Or, hold me, if thou wilt, but come
not near,
Let me pursue thee still in ghostly
grace ;
Far off let me pursue thee, for I fear
To faint before thy face.

AT CHAMBERS.

To the chamber, where now uncaring
I sit apart from the strife,
While the fool and the knave are sharing
The pleasures and profits of life,

There came a faint knock at the door,
. Not long since on a terrible day ;
One faint little knock, and no more ;
And I brushed the loose papers away.

And as no one made answer, I rose,
With quick step and impatience of
look,
And a glance of the eye which froze,
And a ready voice of rebuke.

But when the door opened, behold !
A mother, low-voiced and mild,
Whose thin shawl and weak arms enfold
A pale little two-year-old child.

What brought her there ? Would I
relieve her ?
Was all the poor mother could say ;
For her child, scarce recovered from
fever,
Left the hospital only that day.

Pale, indeed, was the child ; yet so
cheerful,
That, seeing me wonder, she said,
Of doubt and repulse, grown fearful,
“ Please look at his dear little head ; ”

And snatched off the little bonnet,
And so in a moment laid bare
A shorn little head, and upon it
No trace of the newly-come hair.

When, seeing the stranger's eye
Grow soft ; of an innocent guile
The child looked up, shrinking and shy,
With the ghost of a baby smile.

Poor child ! I thought, so soon come
To the knowledge of lives oppressed,
To whom poverty comes with home,
And sickness brings food and rest :

Who art launched forth, a frail little
boat,
In the midst of life's turbulent sea,
To sink, it may be, or to float
On great waves that care nothing for
thee.

What awaits thee ? An early peace
In the depths of a little grave,
Or, despite all thy ills to increase,
Through some dark chance, mighty
to save ;

Till in stalwart manhood you meet
The strong man, who regards you to-
day,
Crawling slowly along the street,
In old age withered and gray ?

Who knows ? But the thoughts I have
told
In one instant flashed through my
brain,
As the poor mother, careful of cold,
Clasped her infant to her again.

And I, if I searched for my purse,
Was I selfish, say you, and wrong ?
Surely silver is wasted worse
Than in earning the right to a song !

EVENSONG.

Till hymns and the prayers were done, and the village church was still,
As I lay in a waking dream in the churchyard upon the hill.

The graves were all around, and the dark yews over my head,
And below me the winding stream and the exquisite valley were spread.

The sun was sloping down with a glory of dying rays,
And the hills were bathed in gold, and the woods were vocal with praise.

But from the deep-set valley there rose a vapour of grey,
And the sweet day sank, and the glory waxed fainter and faded away.

Then there came, like a chilling wind, a cold, low whisper of doubt,
Which silenced the echo of hymn, and blotted the glories out.

And I wrestled with powers unseen, and strove with a Teacher divine,
Like Jacob who strove with the angel, and found with the dawn a sign.

* * * * *

For I thought of the words they sang : "It is He that hath made us indeed";
And my thought flew back to the Fathers of thought and their atheist creed—

How atom with atom at first fortuitously combined,
Formed all, from the worlds without to the innermost worlds of mind ;

And I thought : What, if this be true, and no Maker there is indeed,
And God is the symbol alone of a feeble and worn-out creed ;

And from uncreate atoms, impelled by a blind chance driving on free,
Grew together the primal forms of all essences that be'

Then a voice : If they were, indeed, they were separate one from one
By a gulph as broad as yawns in space betwixt sun and sun—

Self-centred and self-contained, disenvironed and isolate ;
Drawn together by a hidden love, torn apart by a hidden hate.

What power was this—chance, will you say ? But chance, what else can it mean
Than the hidden Cause of things by human reason unseen ?

Chance ! Then Chance were a name for God, or each atom bearing a soul
Indivisible, like with like, part and whole of the Infinite Whole.

Were God, as the Pantheist taught, God in earth, and in sky, and in air,
God through every thought and thing, and made manifest everywhere;

The spring and movement of things—the stir, the breathing of breath,
Without which all things were quenched in the calm of an infinite death;

Or, if within each there lay some germ of an unborn power,
God planted it first, God quickened, God raised it from seed to flower.

Though beneath the weird cosmical force, which we wield and yet cannot name,
From the germ or the rock we draw out low gleams of life's faintest flame;

Though we lose the will that commands, and the muscles that wait and serve,
In some haze of a self-set spring of the molecules of nerve;

Though we sink all spirit in matter, and let the Theogonies die,
Life and death are; thinker and thought; outward, inward; I, and not I,
And the I is the Giver of life, and without it the matter must die.

* * * * *

Then I ceased for a while from thought, as I lay on the long green grass,
Hearing echoes of hymns anew, and letting the moments pass.

* * * * *

The evening was mounting upward; the sunbeams had left the hill;
But the dying daylight lingered, and all the valley was still.

* * * * *

Then I said: But if God there be, how shall man by his thinking find,
Who is only a finite creature, the depths of the Infinite Mind—

Who sounds with a tiny plummet, who scans with a purblind eye,
The depths of that fathomless ocean, the wastes of that limitless sky?

Shall we bow to a fetish, a symbol, which maybe nor sees nor hears;
Or, seeing and hearing indeed, takes no thought for our hopes or fears;

Who is dumb, though we long for a word; who is deaf, though his children cry;
Who is Master, yet bears with evil—Lord, and lets all precious things die?

Or if in despair we turn from the godless and meaningless plan,
What do we, but make for ourselves a God in the image of man—

A creature of love and hate, a creature who makes for good,
But barred by an evil master from working the things that he would?

If he be not a reflex image, we may not know him at all ;
 If he be, we are God ourselves—to ourselves we shall stand or fall.

Then the voice : But what folly is this ! Cannot God indeed be known,
 If we know not the hidden essence that forms Him and builds His throne ?

Is all our knowledge naught, of sea, and of sky, and of star,
 Till we know them, not as they seem to our thinking, but as they are ?

We who build the whole fabric of knowledge on vague abstractions sublime ;
 We who whirl through an infinite space, and live in an infinite time ;

We who prate of Motion and Force, not knowing that on either side
 Black gulphs unavoidable yawn, dark riddles our thought deride ;

Shall we hold our science as naught in all things of earth, because
 We know but the seemings and shows, the relations, and not the cause—

Not only as he who admires the rainbow and cloud of gold,
 Knows that 'tis but a form of vapour his wondering eyes behold ;

But as he who sees and knows, and knowing would fain ignore
 What he knows since the essence of things is hid, and he knows not more—

Or who would not love his love, or walk hand in hand with his friend,
 Since he sees not the roots of the tree from whose branches life's blossoms depend ?

Or how should the sight we see, any more than the sound we hear,
 Be a thing which exists for our thought, apart from the eye or the ear ;

Is not every atom of dust, which compacted we call the earth,
 A miracle baffling our thought with insoluble wonders of birth ?

And know we not, indeed, that the matter which men have taught,
 Is itself an essence unseen and untouched—but by spirit and thought ?

Tush ! It is but a brain-sick dream. What was it that taught us the laws
 Which stand as a bar between us and the thought of the Infinite Cause ?

Is He infinite, out of relation, and absolute, past finding out ?
 Reach we not an antinomy here ? feel we here no striving of doubt ?

How, then, shall the finite define the bounds of the infinite plan,
This is finite, and infinite this : here is Deity, here is man.

If our judgment be relative only, how then shall our brain transcend
The limits of relative thought ; grown too eager to comprehend ?

For he passes the bounds of relation, if any there be who can
Distinguish the absolute God from the relative in man :

He has bridged the gulph ; he has leaped o'er the bound ; he has seen with his eyes
For a moment the land unseen, that beyond the mountain peaks lies.

Nay ! we see but a part of God, since we gaze with a finite sight ;
And yet not Darkness is He, but a blinding splendour of light.

Do we shrink from this light, and let our dazzled eyeballs fall ?
Nay ! a God fully known or utterly dark, were not God at all.

Though we hold not that in some sphere which our thought may never conceive,
There comes not a time when, to know may be all, and not, to believe ;

Nor yet that the right which we love, and the wrong which we hate to-day,
May not show as reversed, or as one, when the finite has passed away ;

God we know in our image indeed, since we are in the image of Him,
Of His splendour a faint low gleam, of His glory a reflex dim.

Bowing not to the all unknown, nor to that which is searched out quite ;
But to That which is known, yet unknown--to the darkness that comes of light,
To the contact of God with man, to the struggle and triumph of right.

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Then I ceased for a while from thought, as I lay on the long green grass,
Hearing echoes of hymns grown nearer, and letting the moments pass.

Exult, oh dust and ashes ! the low voices seemed to say ;
And then came a sudden hush, and the jubilance faded away.

The evening was dying now, and the moon-rise was on the hill,
And the soft light touched the river, and all the valley was still.

* * * * * * *

Then I thought : But if God there be, and our thought may reach Him indeed,
How should this bare knowledge alone stand in lieu of a fuller creed ?

If He be and is good, as they say, how yet can our judgment approve,
'Mid the rule of His iron laws, the place of His infinite love?

The rocks are built up of death, earth and sea teem with ravin and wrong ;
The sole law in Nature we learn, is the law that strengthens the strong.

Through countless ages of time, the Lord has withdrawn Him apart
From all the world He has made, save the world of the human heart.

Without and within all is pain, from the cry of the child at birth,
To its parting sigh in age, when it looks for a happier earth.

Should you plead that God's order goes forth with a measured footstep sublime,
Know you not that you thrust Him back thus to the first beginnings of time,—

That a spark, a moment, a flash, and His work was over and done ;
And the worlds were sent forth for ever, each circling around its sun.

Bearing with it all secrets of being, all potencies undefined,
All forms and changes of matter, all growths and achievements of mind.

What is there for our worship in this, and should not our reason say,
He is, and made us indeed, but hides Him too far away ?

Though He lives, yet is He as one dead ; and we, who would prostrate fall
Before the light of His Presence, we see not nor know Him at all.

Then the voice : Oh folly of doubt ! what is time that we deem so far,
What else but a multiple vast of the little lives that are ?

He who lives for the fifty years, which scarce rear thought to its prime,
Already a measure has lived of a thousand years of time.

Twice this, and Christ spoke not yet, and from this what a span appears,
The space till our thought is lost in the mists of a million years !

A thousand millions of years—we have leapt with a thought, with a word ;
To the time when no flutter of life 'neath the shield of the trilobite stirred.

All time is too brief for our thought, and yet we would bring God nigh,
Till He worked in His creature's sight, man standing undazzled by.

Such a God were not God indeed ; nor, if He should change at all,
Should we hold, as we hold Him now, the God of both great and small.

How know we the great things from small ? how mark we the adequate cause,
Which might make the Creator impede the march of His perfect laws,—

We, who know but a part, not the whole ? Or were it a fitting thought
He should stoop in our sight to amend the errors His hand had wrought,

So His laws were not perfect at all ? or should He amend them indeed,
How supply by a fitful caprice the want of a normal creed ?

All life is a mode of force, and all force that is force must move ;
'Tis a friction of Outward and Inward, a contrast of Hatred and Love.

Joy and Grief, Right and Wrong, Life and Death, Finite, Infinite, Matter and
Will,
These are the twin wheels of the Chariot of Life, which without them stood still.

Would you seek in an order reversed and amended a Land divine ?
Nay the Wonder of wonders lies in unchangeable design.

Should God break His law as He might ; should He stoop from His infinite skies
To redress that which seems to us wrong, to raise up the life that dies ;

Should He save from His wolf His lamb, from His tiger His innocent child ;
Should He quench the fierce flames, or still the great waves clamouring wild,

I think a great cry would go up from an orderless Universe,
And all the fair fabric of things would wither, as under a curse.

'Tis the God of the savage, is this. What do we who rise by degrees
To the gift of the mind that perceives, and the gift of the eye that sees ?

Does not all our nature tend to a law of unbending rule,
Till equity comes but to mend the law that was made by the fool ?

Who shows highest?—the child or the savage, whose smiles change to rage or
to tears ?

Or the statesman moving, unmoved, through a nation's desires and fears ?

Or the pilgrim whose eyes look onward, as if to a distant home,
Never turning aside from his path, whatever allurements may come ?

All Higher is more Unmoved ; and the more unbroken the law,
The more sure does the Giver show to the eyes of a wondering awe.

Nor is it with all of truth that they make their voices complain,
Who weary our thought with tales of a constant ruin and pain.

It is but a brain-sick dream that would gloat o'er the hopeless bed,
Or the wreck, or the crash, or the fight, with their tales of the dying and dead.

Pain comes ; hopeless pain, God knows and we know, again and again ;
But even pain has its intervals blest, when 'tis heaven to be free from pain.

And I think that the wretch who lies pressed by a load of incurable ill,
With a grave pity pities himself, but would choose to have lived to it still ;

And, as he whom the tiger bears in his jaws to his blood-stained den
Feels no pain nor fear, but a wonder, what comes in the wonderful "Then,"

He pities himself and yet knows, as he casts up life's chequered sum,
It were best on the whole to have lived, whatever calamity come.

And the earth is full of joy. Every blade of grass that springs ;
Every cool worm that crawls content as the eagle on soaring wings ;

Every summer day instinct with life ; every dawn when from waking bird
And morning hum of the bee, a chorus of praise is heard ;

Every gnat that sports in the sun for his little life of a day ;
Every flower that opens its cup to the dews of a perfumed May ;

Every child that wakes with a smile, and sings to the ceiling at dawn ;
Every bosom which knows a new hope stir beneath its virginal lawn ;

Every young soul, ardent and high, rushing forth into life's hot fight ;
Every home of happy content, lit by love's own mystical light ;

Every worker who works till the evening, and earns before night his wage,
Be his work a furrow straight-drawn, or the joy of a bettered age ;

Every thinker who, standing aloof from the throng, finds a high delight
In striking with tongue or with pen a stroke for the triumph of right ;—

All these know that life is sweet ; all these, with a consonant voice,
Read the legend of Time with a smile, and that which they read is, " Rejoice ! "

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Then again I ceased from thought, as I lay on the long green grass,
Hearing hymns which grew fuller and suarer, and letting the moments pass.

Exult, oh dust and ashes ! exult and rejoice ! they said,
For blessed are they who live, and blessed are they who are dead.

Then again they ceased and were still, and my thought began once more,
But touched with a silvery gleam of hopes that were hidden before ;

The moon had climbed up the clear sky, far above the black pines on the hill,
And the river ran molten silver, and all the valley was still.

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Then I said : But if God there be, who made us indeed and is good,
What guide has He left for our feet to walk in the ways that He would ?

For though He should speak indeed, yet, as soon as His voice grew dumb,
It were only through human speech that the message it bore might come,

Sunk to levels of human thought, and always marred and confined
By the chain of a halting tongue, and the curse of a finite mind ;

So that he who would learn, indeed, what precepts His will has taught,
Must dim with a secular learning the brightness his soul has sought.

Who can tell how those scattered leaves through gradual ages grew,
Adding chaff and dust from the world to the accents simple and true ?

If one might from the seer's wild visions, or stories of fraud and blood,
Or lore of the world-worn Sultan, discern the sure voice of good,

Such a mind were a God to itself ; or if you should answer, For each
God has set a sure mentor within, with power to convince and teach ;

Yet it speaks with a changeful voice, which alters with race and clime,
Nay, even in the self-same lands is changed with the changes of time ;

So that 'twixt the old Europe of story and that which we know to-day,
Yawns a gulph, as wide almost as parts us from far Cathay ;

What power has such voice to help us ? Or if we should turn instead
To the precious dissonant pages, which keep what the Teacher said ;

How reduce them to one indeed, or how seek in vain to ignore
The forgotten teachers who taught His counsels of mercy before ?

Not "an eye for an eye" alone, was the rule which they loved to teach,
But Mercy, and Pity, and Love, though they spoke with a halting speech,

And He spake with the tongue of those who had spoken and then were dumb,
And clothed in the words of the Law, which He loved, would His precepts
come ;

Other teachers have drawn more millions, who follow more faithful than we ;
Other teachers have taught a rule as stern and unselfish as He.

If we shrink from the Caliph fierce, who carved out a faith with his sword,
What say we of the pilgrim who sways the old East with his gentle word ?

Or what of the sage whose vague thoughts, over populous wastes of earth,
Have led millions of fettered feet to the grave from the day of birth ?

Or how can we part indeed, the show, the portent, the sign,
From the simple words which glow with the light of a teaching Divine ?

And if careless of these, as of growths which spring up and bear fruit and fall,
Yet how shall we thought accept the crowning wonder of all ?

Yet if this we reject, wherein, doth our faith and assurance lie ?
What is it to us that God lives, we who live for a little and die ;

Or why were it not more wise to live as the beasts of to-day,
Taking life, while it lasts, as a gift, and secure of the future as they ?

Then the voice : Oh, disease of doubt ! now I seem to hold you indeed,
Keeping fast in my grasp at length the sum of your dreary creed.

How else should man prove God's will, than through methods of human thought?

How else than through human words should he gather the things that he ought?

If the Lord should speak day by day from Sinai, mid clouds and fire,
Should we hear 'mid those thunders loud the still voices which now inspire?

Would not either that awful sound, like that vivid and scorching blaze,
Confuse our struggling thought, and our tottering footsteps amaze?

Or, if it should peal so clear that to hear were to obey indeed,
'Twere a thing of dry knowledge alone, not one of a faithful creed;

No lantern for erring feet, but a glare on a white, straight road,
Where life struggled its weary day, to sink before night with its load;

Where the blinded soul might long for the shade of a cloud of doubt,
And yearn for dead silence, to blot that terrible utterance out.

Yet God is not silent indeed; not seldom from every page —
From the lisping story of old to the seer with his noble rage;

From the simple life divine, with its accents gentle and true,
To the thinker who formed by his learning and watered the faith as it grew;

All are fired by the Spirit of God. Nor true is the doubt you teach,
That God speaks not to all men the same, but differs 'twixt each and each.

Each differs from each a little, with difference of race and of clime;
Each is changed, but not transformed, with the onward process of time;

Each nation, each age, has its laws, whereto it shall stand or fall,
But built on a wider Law, which is under and over them all.

Nor doubt we that from Western wilds to the long-sealed isles of Japan,
There runs the unbroken realm of a Law that is common to man.

Not as ours shows the law they obey, and yet it is one and the same,
Though it comes in a varying shape, and is named by another name.

Not so shall your doubt prevail; nor if any should dream to-day,
By praise of Jew or of Greek, to dissolve His glory away,

Can they hold that God left His world with no gleam of glory from Him,
No light clouds edged with splendour, no radiance of Godhead dim.

Others were before Christ had come. Oh ! dear dead Teacher, whose word,
Long before the sweet voice on the Hill, young hearts had quickened and stirred ;

Who spak'st of the soul and the life ; with limbs chilled by the rising death,
Yielding up to thy faith, with a smile, the last gasp of thy earthly breath ;—

And thou, oh golden-mouthed sage, who with brilliance of thought as of tongue,
Didst sing of thy Commonwealth fair, the noblest of epics unsung ;

In whose pages thy Master's words shine forth, sublimed and refined
In the music of perfect language, inspired by a faithful mind ;—

And ye seers of Israel and doctors, whose breath was breathed forth to move
The dry dead bones of the Law with the life of a larger love ;—

Or thou, great Saint of the East, in whose footsteps the millions have trod
Till from life, like an innocent dream, they pass'd and were lost in God ;—

And thou, quaint teacher of old, whose dead words, though all life be gone,
Through the peaceful Atheist realms keep the millions labouring on ;—

Shall I hold that ye, as the rest, spake no echo of things divine,
That no gleam of a clouded sun through the mists of your teaching may shine ?

Nay ; such thoughts were to doubt of God. Yet, strange it is and yet sure,
No teacher of old was full of mercy as ours, or pure.

'Twixt the love that He taught, and the Greek with his nameless, terrible love,
Yawns a gulph as wide as parts hell beneath and heaven above ;

'Twixt His rule of a Higher Mercy and that which the Rabbi taught,
Lies the gulph between glowing Act and barren ashes of Thought.

For the pure thought smirched and souled, or buried in pedant Jore,
He brought a sweet Reason of Force, such as man knew never before.

What to us are the men of the East, though they preach their own Gospel
indeed ?

We are men of the West, and shall stand or fall by a Western creed.

Though we see in those Scriptures antique, faint flames of Diviner fire,
Who would change to Buddha from Christ, as a change from lower to higher?

Nay! He is our Teacher indeed. Little boots it to-day to seek
To arraign, with a laboured learning, the words that men heard Him speak;

To cavil, to carp, to strive, through the mists of an age-long haze,
To dim to a common light the star which could once amaze;

To fix by some pigmy canon, too short for the tale of to-day,
The facts of a brief life, fled eighteen centuries away;

To mark by a guess, and to spurn, as born of a later age,
The proofs which, whenever writ, bear God's finger on every page;

Or to sneer at the wonders they saw Him work, or believed they saw;
We who know that unbending sequence is only a phase of law,

No wonder which God might do if it rested on witness of men,
Would turn to it our thought of to-day as it turned the multitudes then.

Nor proved would avail a whit if the teaching itself were not pure;
Nor if it were pure as His would make it one whit more sure.

And for the great Wonder of all. If any there be who fears
That the spark of God in his breast may be quenched in a few short years;

Who feels his faith's fire blaze aloft more clear than it burnt before,
By the thought of the empty tomb and the stone rolled back from the door:

For him was the miracle done. If no proof makes clearer to me
Than His word to my inner sense, the Higher life that shall be;

If no Force that has once leapt forth can ever decline and fall,
From the dead forces stirring the worlds, to the Life-force which dominates all;

But the sum of life is the same, and shall be when the world is done,
As it was when its first faint spark was stirred by the kiss of the sun;—

If I feel a sure knowledge within, which shall never be blotted out,
A Longing, a Faith, a Conviction, too strong for a Whisper of Doubt

That my life shall be hid with a Lord, who shall do the thing that is best—
To be purged, it may be, long time, or taken at once to rest,—

To live, it may be, myself ; from all else, individual, sole,
Or blended with other lives, or sunk in the Infinite whole—

Though I doubt not that that which is I may endure in the ages to be,
Since I know not what bars hold apart the Not-Me and the mystical Me ;—

How else than thro' Him do I grasp the faith that for Greek and Jew
Was hidden, or but dimly seen, which nor Moses nor Sokrates knew ?

Ay ! He is our Teacher indeed. He is risen, and we shall rise ;
But if only as we He rose, not the less He lives in the skies.

And if those who proclaim Him to day in the dim gray lands of the East,
Prove him not by portent or sign, not by trick or secret of priest ;

But for old cosmogonies dead, and saint precepts too weak for our need,
Offer God brought nearer to man in a living and glowing creed.

The pure teaching, the passionate love, taking thought for the humble and weak,
The pitiful scorn of wrong, which His Scriptures everywhere speak,

Not writ for the sage in his cell, but preached 'mid the turmoil and strife,
And touched with a living brand from the fire of the Altar of Life.

So, of all the wonders they tell, no wonder our hearts has stirred
Like the Wonder which lives with us still in a living and breathing Word.

More than portents, more than all splendours of rank loyal hearts devise,
More than visions of heavenly forms caught up and lost in the skies,

This the crowning miracle shows, before which we must prostrate fall ;
For this is the living voice of the Lord and Giver of all.

* * * * *

Then I ceased again from thought, as I lay on the long grave-grass,
Thrilled through by a music of hymns, and letting the moments pass.

"Exult and rejoice" ! they sang in high unison, now combined
Which were warring voices before, the voices of heart and mind.

The earth was flooded with light, over valley and river and hill,
And this is the hymn which I heard them sing, while the world lay still :

"Exult, oh dust and ashes ! Rejoice, all ye that are dead !
For ye live too who lie beneath, as we live who walk overhead.

As God lives, so ye are living ; ye are living and moving to-day,
Not as they live who breathe and move, yet living and conscious as they.

And ye too, oh living, exult. Young and old, exult and rejoice ;
For the Lord of the quick and the dead lives for ever : we hear His voice.

We have heard His voice, and we hear it sound wider and more increased,
To the sunset plains of the West from the peaks of the furthest East.

For the quick and the dead, it was given ; for them it is sounding still,
And no pause of silence arrests the clear voice of the Infinite Will.

Not only through Christ long since, and the teachers of ages gone,
But to-day He speaks, day by day, to those who are toiling on ;

More clear perhaps then, to the ear, and with nigher voice and more plain,
But still the same Teacher Divine, speaking to us again and again.

For I like not his creed, if any there be, who shall dare to hold
That God comes to us only at times far away in the centuries old.

Not so ; but He dwells with us still ; and maybe, though I know not indeed,
He will send us a Christ again, with a fuller and perfecter creed—

A Christ who shall speak to all men, East and West, and North and South,
Till the whole world shall hear and believe the gracious words of His mouth.

When knowledge has pierced through the wastes, chaining earth together and sea,
And the bars of to-day are lost in the union of all that shall be ;

And the brotherhood that He loved is more than a saintly thought,
And the wars and the strifes which we mourn are lost in the peace He taught ;

Then Christ coming shall make all things new. Or it may be that ages of pain
Shall quench the dim light of to-day, bringing back the thick darkness again.

And then, slow as the tide which flows on though each wave may seem to
recede,
Man advances again and again to the Rock of a higher creed.

Or it may be no teacher shall come down again with God in his face,
But the light which before was reflected from One shall shine on the race.

And as this wide earth grows smaller, and men to men nearer draw,
There may spring from the root of the race the flower of a nobler law,

Growing fairer, and still more fair ; or maybe, through long ages of time,
Man shall rise up from type to type, to the strength of an essence sublime,

Removed as far in knowledge, in length of life, and in good
From us, as we from the mollusc which gasped in the first warm flood,—

A creature so wise and so high that he scorns all allurement of ill,
Marching on through an ordered life in the strength of a steadfast will.

Who knows ? But, however it be, we live, and shall live indeed,
In ourselves or in others to come. What more doth our longing need ?

Hid with God, or on earth, we shall see, burning brighter and yet more bright,
The sphere of humanity move throughout time on its pathway of light ;

Circling round with a narrower orbit, as age upon age fleets away,
The Centre of Force and of Being, the Fountain of Light and of Day,

Till, nearer drawn, and more near, at last it shall merge and fall
In its source ; man is swallowed in God, the Part is lost in the All ;

One more world is recalled to rest, one more star adds its fire to the sun,
One light less wanders thro' space, and the story of man is done ! ”

* * * * *

Then slowly I rose to go from my place on the long grave-grass,
Where so long I had lain in deep thought, and letting the moments pass :

A great light was flooding the plains of the earth and the uttermost sky,
The low church and the deep-sunk vale, and the place where one day I shall lie,

The fresh graves of those we have lost, the dark yews with their reverend gloom,
And the green wave which only marks the place of the nameless tomb ;

And thro' all the clear spaces above—oh wonder ! oh glory of Light !—
Came forth myriads on myriads of worlds, the shining host of the night,—

The vast forces and fires that know the same sun and centre as we ;
The faint planets which roll in vast orbits round suns we shall never see ;

The rays which had sped from the first, with the awful swiftness of light,
To reach only then, it might be, the confines of mortal sight :

Oh, wonder of Cosmical Order ! oh, Maker and Ruler of all,
Before whose Infinite greatness in silence we worship and fall !

Could I doubt that the Will which keeps this great Universe steadfast and sure
Might be less than His creatures thought, full of goodness, pitiful, pure ?

Could I dream that the Power which keeps those great suns circling around,
Took no thought for the humblest life which flutters and falls to the ground ?

"Oh, Faith ! thou art higher than all." Then I turned from the glories above,
And from every casement new-lit there shone a soft radiance of love :

Young mothers were teaching their children to fold little hands in prayer ;
Strong fathers were resting from toil, 'mid the hush of the Sabbath air ; *

Peasant lovers strolled thro' the lanes, shy and dissident, each with each,
Yet knit by some subtle union too fine for their halting speech :

Humble lives, to low thought, and low ; but linked, to the thinker's eye,
By a bond that is stronger than death, with the lights of the ultimate sky :

Here as there, the great drama of life rolled on, and a jubilant voice
Thrilled through me ineffable, vast, and bade me exult and rejoice ;

Exult and rejoice, oh soul ! sang my being to a mystical hymn
As I passed by the cool bright wolds, as I threaded my pinewoods dim ;

Rejoice and be sure ! as I passed to my fair home under the hill,
Wrapt round with a happy content,—and the world and my soul were still !

SONG.

BEAM on me, fair Ideal, beam on me !
Too long thou hast concealed thee in
a cloud ;
Mine is no vision strong to pierce to
thee,
Nor voice complaining loud,
Whereby thou mightest find thy dear,
and come
To thine own heart, and long-expecting
home.

Too long thou dost withdraw thee from
mine eyes ;
Too long thou lingerest. Ah, truant
sweet !
Dost thou no reckoning take of all my
sighs,
While Time with flying feet
Speeds onward, till the westering sun
sinks low—
With cruel feet so swift and yet so
slow ?

Time was I thought that thou wouldest
come a maid

White-armed, with deep blue eyes
and sunny head ;

But, ah ! too long the lovely vision
stayed.

And then, when this was fled,
Fame, with blown clarion clear, and
wide-spread wings,
Fame, crown and summit of created
things.

And then in guise of Truth, when this
* grew faint,

Truth in Belief and Act, and Life
and Thought,
White-robed and virginal, a pure cold
saint,

Thou cam'st awhile, long sought ;
But only in glimpses camest thou, so I
Watch wearily until thou passet by.

I wait, I watch, I hunger, though I
know

Thou wilt not come at all who stay'st
so long.

My hope has lost its strength, my heart
its glow ;

I grow too cold for song :
Long since I might have sung, hadst thou
come then,

A song to echo through the souls of men.

Yet, since 'tis better far to dream in
sleep,

Than wholly lose the treacheries of
time,

I hold it gain to have seen thy garments
sweep

On the far hills sublime :
Still will I hope thy glorious face to
see,—
Beam on me, fair Ideal, beam on me !

AT LAST.

LET me at last be laid
On that hillside I know which scans
the vale,
Beneath the thick yews' shade,
For shelter when the rains and winds
prevail.

It cannot be the eye
Is blinded when we die,
So that we know no more at all
The dawns increase, the evenings fall ;
Shut up within a mouldering chest of
wood
Asleep, and careless of our children's
good.

Shall I not feel the spring,
The yearly resurrection of the earth,
Stir thro' each sleeping thing
With the fair throbings and alarms of
birth,
Calling at its own hour
On folded leaf and flower,
Calling the lamb, the lark, the bee,
Calling the crocus and anemone,
Calling new lustre to the maiden's eye,
And to the youth love and ambition
high ?

Shall I no more admire
The winding river kiss the daisied plain ?
Nor see the dawn's cold fire
Steal downward from the rosy hills
again ?
Nor watch the frowning cloud,
Sublime with mutterings loud,
Burst on the vale, nor eves of gold,
Nor crescent moons, nor starlights cold,
Nor the red casements glimmer on the
hill
At Yule-tides, when the frozen leas
are still ?

Or should my children's tread
Through Sabbath twilights, when the
 hymns are done,
Come softly overhead,
Shall no sweet quickening through
 my bosom run,
Till all my soul exhale
Into the primrose pale,
And every flower which springs above
Breathes a new perfume from my love ;
And I shall throb, and stir, and thrill
 beneath
With a pure passion stronger far than
death ?

Sweet thought ! fair, gracious dream,
Too fair and fleeting for our clearer
 view !
How should our reason deem
That those dear souls, who sleep
 beneath the blue
In rayless caverns dim,
'Mid ocean monsters grim,
Or whitening on the trackless sand,
Or with strange corpses on each hand
In battle-trench or city graveyard lie,
Break not their prison-bonds till time
 shall die ?

Nay, 'tis not so indeed.
With the last fluttering of the failing
 breath
The clay-cold form doth breed
A viewless essence, far too fine for
 death ;
And ere one voice can mourn,
On upward pinions borne,
They are hidden, they are hidden, in
 some thin air,
Far from corruption, far from care,
Where through a veil they view their
 former scene,
Only a little touched by what has been.

Touched but a little ; and yet,
Conscious of every change that doth
 befal,
By constant change beset,
The creatures of this tiny whirling
 ball,
Filled with a higher being,
Dowered with a clearer seeing,
Risen to a vaster scheme of life,
To wider joys and nobler strife,
Viewing our little human hopes and
 fears
As we our children's fleeting smiles and
tears.

Then, whether with fire they burn
This dwelling-house of mine when I am
 fled,
And in a marble urn
My ashes rest by my beloved dead,
Or in the sweet cold earth
I pass from death to birth,
And pay kind Nature's life-long debt
In heart's-ease and in violet—
In charnel-yard or hidden ocean wave,
Where'er I lie, I shall not scorn my
 grave.

SONG.

LOVE-SIGHS that are sighed and spent
 in vain,
Ah ! folly, folly,
Thou dost transmute into a precious
 pain,
Sweet melancholy.
Ah ! folly, folly,
Ah ! fair melancholy,
Sweeter by far thy mild remedial pain,
Than if fierce hope should rise and
 throb again.

High hopes of glory sunk to naught,
 Ah ! folly, folly,
 And deep perplexities of baffled thought
 Thou healest, melancholy.
 Ah ! folly, folly,
 Ah ! sweet melancholy,
 Thou dost bear with thee a balm unsought,
 To heal the wounds of love and pride
 and thought.

Yet thou art a trivial cure for ill,
 Pale melancholy,
 Fitting best a feebler brain and will,
 Ah ! folly, folly,
 Ay, sweet melancholy,
 Folly art thou, folly.
 Who only may not trivial ills endure
 Will to thy pharmacy entrust his cure.

Since thou shalt not heal the wounds I
 know,
 Pale melancholy,
 I will seek if any comfort glow
 In jovial folly,
 Ah ! folly, folly,
 Worse than melancholy,
 No other cure there is for Fortune's
 smart
 Than a soul self-contained, and a proud
 innocent heart !

THE DIALOGUE.

UNTO my soul I said,
 " Oh, vagrant soul !
 When o'er my living head
 A few years roll,
 Is't true that thou shalt fly
 Far away into the sky,
 Leaving me in my place
 Alone with my disgrace ?

" For thou wilt stand in the East,
 The night withdrawn,
 White-robed as is a priest,
 At the door of dawn ;
 While I within the ground,
 In misery fast bound,
 Shall lie, blind, deaf, and foul,
 Since thou art fled, O soul."

Then said my soul to me :
 " Thy lot is best ;
 For thou shalt tranquil be,
 Sunk deep in rest,
 While naked I shall know
 The intolerable glow
 When as, the sun, shall rise
 A fire in fiery skies.

" Thou shalt lie cool and dark,
 Forgetting all ;
 I shall float shamed and stark,
 Till the sun fall :
 Thou shalt be earth in earth,
 Preparing for new birth ;
 While me in the heaven fierce,
 Pure glories fright and pierce."

Then said I to my soul,
 And she to me :
 " Where'er life's current roll
 We twain shall be,
 Part here and part not herc,
 Partners in hope and fear,
 Until, our exile done,
 We meet at last in one."

THE BIRTH OF VERSE.

BLIND thoughts which occupy the
 brain,
 Dumb melodies which fill the ear,
 Dim perturbations, precious pain,
 A gleam of hope, a chill of fear,—

These seize the poet's soul, and mould
The ore of fancy into gold.

And first no definite thought there is
In all that affluence of sound,
Like those sweet formless melodies
Piped to the listening woods around,
By birds which never teacher had
But love and knowledge : they are glad.

Till, when the chambers of the soul
Are filled with inarticulate airs,
A spirit comes which doth control
The music, and its end prepares ;
And, with a power serene and strong,
Shapes these wild melodies to song.

Or haply, thoughts which glow and burn
Await long time the fitting strain,
Which, swiftly swelling, seems to turn
The silence to a load of pain ;
And somewhat in him seems to cry,
" I will have utterance, or I die ! "

Then of a sudden, full, complete,
The strong strain bursting into sound,
Words come with rhythmic rush of feet,
Fit music girds the language round,
And with a comeliness unsought,
Appears the winged, embodied thought.

But howsoever they may rise,
Fit words and music come to birth ;
There soars an angel to the skies,
There walks a Presence on the earth—
A something which shall yet inspire
Myriads of souls unborn with fire.

And when his voice is hushed and dumb,
The flame burnt out, the glory dead,

He feels a thrill of wonder come
At that which his poor tongue has
said ;
And thinks of each diviner line—
" Only the hand that wrote was mine."

SONG.

Oif ! were I rich and mighty,
With store of gems and gold,
And you, a beggar at my gate,
Lay starving in the cold ;
I wonder, could I bear
To leave you pining there ?

Or, if I were an angel,
And you an earth-born thing,
Beseeching me to touch you
In rising with my wing ;
I wonder should I soar
Aloft, nor heed you more ?

Or, dear, if I were only
A maiden cold and sweet,
And you, a humble lover,
Sighed vainly at my feet ;
I wonder if my heart
Would know no pain or smart ?

THE ENIGMA.

THE gaslights flutter and flare
On the cruel stones of the street,
And beneath in the sordid glare
Pace legions of weary feet ;
Fair faces that soon shall grow hard,
Shy glances already grown bold,
The wrecks of a girlhood marred
By shame and hunger and cold.

But here, as she passes along,
 Is one whose young cheek still shows,
 'Mid the pallid, pitiful throng,
 The fresh bloom of a tender rose.
 Not long has she walked with vice,
 A recruit to the army of Ill,
 A fresh lamb for the sacrifice
 That steams up to Moloch still.

And the spell through which youth
 draws all,
 The faint shyness in hurrying walk,
 The lithe form slender and tall,
 The soft burr in her simple talk,
 Constrains the grave passer, whose brain
 Is long leagues of fancy apart,
 To thrill with a sudden pain
 And an emptiness of heart.

Poor child ! since it is not long
 Since you were indeed but a child,
 A gay thing of bird-like song,
 And even as a bird is wild ;
 With no shadow of thought or care,
 Laughing all the sweet hours away,
 When every morning was fair,
 And every season a May.

Through the red fallow on the hill
 The white team laboured along,
 While you roamed the green copses at
 will,
 And mimicked the cuckoo's song ;
 While they tossed and carried the hay,
 While the reapers were hid in the
 wheat,
 You had only to laugh and to play,
 Or to bathe in the brook your feet.

For your mother left you a child,
 Your rough father's pride and joy :
 Rejoiced that his girl was as wild
 And fearless as any boy.

Though you would not plunder the
 nest,
 Nor harry the shrieking hare,
 You could gallop bare-backed with the
 best,
 And knew where the orchises were.

" Like a boy " was what they said,
 With your straight limbs and fearless
 face ;
 Like a girl in the golden head,
 Gay fancies, and nameless grace.
 Like a boy in high courage and all
 Quick forces, and daring of will ;
 Like a girl in the peril to fall,
 And innocent blindness to ill.

And even now, on the sordid street,
 As you pass by the theatre door,
 You bring with you some freshness
 sweet
 Of the brightness and breezes of
 yore.
 Not yet are the frank eyes grown bold,
 Not yet have they lost all their joy ;
 Not yet has time taken the gold
 From the short crisp curls of the
 boy.

And if truly a boy's they were,
 Not thus would he pace forlorn ;
 Nor would careless passers-by dare
 To shoot out the lips of scorn.
 Is it Nature or man that makes
 An unequal judgment arraign
 Those whose equal nature takes
 The mark of the self-same stain ?

Leaving this one, shame and disgrace ;
 Leaving that one, honour and fame ;
 To this one, confusion of face,
 To that one, a stainless name :

A high port and respect and wealth

For the one who is guilty indeed,
While the innocent walks by stealth
Through rough places with feet that
bleed.

Do I touch a deep ulcer of Time,
A created or ultimate ill,
A primal curse or a crime,
Self-inflicted through ignorance still?
But meanwhile, poor truant, you come
With a new face year after year,
Leaving innocence, freedom, and home
For these dens of weeping and fear.

To decline by a swift decay,
To a thing so low and forlorn,
That, for all your fresh beauty to-day,
It were better you never were born ;
Or to find in some rare-sent hour,
As a lily rooted in mire,
Love spring with its pure white flower
From the lowest depths of desire.

Heaven pity you ! So little turns
The stream of our lives from the
right ;
So like is the flame that burns
To the hearth that gives warmth and
light ;
So fine the impassable fence,
Set for ever 'twixt right and wrong,
Between white lives of innocence
And dark lives too dreadful for song.

TO THE TORMENTORS.

DEAR little friend, who, day by day,
Before the door of home
Art ready waiting till thy master come,
With monitory paw and noise,
Swelling to half delirious joys,

Whether my path I take
By leafy coverts known to thee before,
Where the gay coney loves to play,
Or the loud pheasant whirls from out
the brake
Unharmed by us, save for some frolic
chase,
Or innocent panting race ;
Or who, if by the sunny river's side
I haply my steps I turn,
With loud petition constantly dost
yearn
To fetch the whirling stake from the
warm tide ;
Who, if I chide thee, grovellest in the
dust,
And dost forgive me, though I am
unjust,
Blessing the hand that sinote : who
with fond love
Gazest, and fear for me, such as doth
move
Those finer souls which know, yet may
not see,
And are wrapped round and lost in
ecstasy ;—
And thou, dear little friend and soft,
Breathing a gentle air of hearth and
home ;
Whose low purr to the lonely ear doth
soft
With deep refreshment come ;
Though thy quick nature is not frank
and gay
As that one's, yet with graceful play
Thou dost beguile the evenings, and
dost sit
With mien demurely fit ;
With half-closed eyes, as in a dream
Responsive to the singing steam,
Most delicately clean and white,
Thou baskest in the flickering light ;

Quick-tempered art thou, and yet, if a child
 Molest thee, pitiful and mild ;
 And always thy delight is, simply neat,
 To seat thee faithful at thy master's feet ;—

And thou, good friend and strong,
 Who art the docile labourer of the world ;
 Who groanest when the battle mists are curled
 On the red plain ; who toilst all day long
 To make our gain or sport ; who art the care
 That cleanses idle lives, which, but for thee
 And thy pure, noble nature, perhaps might sink
 To lower levels, born of lust and drink,
 And half-forgotten sloughs of infamy,
 Which desperate souls could dare ;—
 And ye, fair timid things, who lightly play
 By summer woodlands at the close of day ;—
 What are ye all, dear creatures, tame or wild ?
 What other nature yours than of a child,
 Whose dumbness finds a voice mighty to call,
 In wordless pity, to the souls of all
 Whose lives I turn to profit, and whose mute
 And constant friendship links the man and brute ?
 Shall I consent to raise
 A torturing hand against your few and evil days ?

Shall I indeed delight
 To take you, helpless kinsmen, fast and bound,
 And while ye lick my hand
 Lay bare your veins and nerves in one red wound,
 Divide the sentient brain ;
 And while the raw flesh quivers with the pain,
 A calm observer stand,
 And drop in some keen acid, and watch it bite
 The writhing life : wrench the still heating heart,
 And with calm voice meanwhile discourse, and bland,
 To boys who jeer or sicken as they gaze,
 Of the great Goddess Science and her gracious ways ?

Great Heaven ! this shall not be, this present hell,
 And none denounce it ; well I know, too well,
 That Nature works by ruin and by wrong,
 Taking no care for any but the strong,
 Taking no care. But we are more than she ;
 We touch to higher levels, a higher love
 Doth through our being move :
 Though we know all our benefits bought by blood,
 And that by suffering only reach we good ;
 Yet not with mocking laughter, nor in play,
 Shall we give death or carve a life away.

And if it be indeed
 For some vast gain of knowledge, we
 might give
 These humble lives that live,
 And for the race should bid the victim
 bleed,
 Only for some great gain,
 Some counterpoise of pain ;
 And that with solemn soul and grave,
 Like his who from the fire 'scapes, or
 the flood,
 Who would save all, ay, with his heart's
 best blood,
 But of his children chooses which to save !

Surely a man should scorn
 To owe his weal to others' death and
 pain ?
 Sure 'twere no real gain
 To batte on lives so weak and so
 forlorn ?
 Nor were it right indeed
 To do for others what for self were
 wrong.
 'Tis but the same dead creed,
 Preaching the naked triumph of the
 strong ;
 And for this Goddess Science, hard and
 stern,
 We shall not let her priests torment and
 burn :
 We fought the priests before, and not
 in vain ;
 And as we fought before, so will we
 fight again.

Every day come they there,
 Afternoon foul or fair,
 Shouting and volleying ;
 Through wintry winds and cold,
 Through summer eves of gold,
 Running and clamouring :
 Never a day but brings,
 Ragged and thinly clad,
 Battling with poverty,
 Hunger, and wretchedness,
 Brave little souls forlorn,
 Gaining hard bread.
 " Terrible accident ;
 Frightful explosion, Sir ;
 News from Australia,
 News from America ;
 Only one halfpenny,
 Special edition, Sir,
Echo, Sir, Echo !"

Thus they shout breathlessly,
 Dashing and hurrying,
 Threading the carriages,
 Under the rapid feet ;
 Frightening the passer-by,
 Down the long street :
 On till they chance to meet
 Some vague philosopher.

* * *
 And straightway the hurry,
 And bustle, and noise,
 Fade away in his thought
 Before tranquiller joys.
 Here are problems indeed,
 Not to solve, it is true,
 But on every side filling
 The fanciful view ;
 Which ere he has grasped them
 Are vanished and gone,
 But leave him in solitude
 Never alone :
 Thoughts of Fate, and of Life,
 And the end of it all,

CHILDREN OF THE STREET.

BRIGHT boys vociferous,
 Girl-children clamorous,
 Shril trebles echoing,
 Down the long street ;

Of the struggle and strife
 Where few rise, many fall ;
 Thoughts of Country and Empire,
 Of Future and Past,
 And the centuries gliding
 So slow, yet so fast :
 Old fancies, yet strange,
 Thoughts sad and yet sweet,
 Of lives come to harvest,
 And lives incomplete ;
 Of the lingering march,
 Of the Infinite plan,
 Bringing slowly, yet surely,
 The glory of man ;
 Of our failures and losses,
 Our victory and gain ;
 Of our treasure of hope
 And our Present of pain.
 And, higher than all,
 That these young voices teach
 A glowing conviction
 Too precious for speech ;
 That somewhere down deep
 In each natural soul
 Sacred verities sleep,
 Holy waterfloods roll ;
 That to young lives untaught,
 Without friend, without home,
 Some gleams of a light
 That is heavenlier come ;
 That to toil which is honest
 A voice calls them still,
 Which is more than the tempter's
 And stronger than ill.

For, poor souls, 'twere better,
 If pleasure were all,
 Not to strive thus and labour,
 But let themselves fall ;
 They might gain, for a time,
 Higher wages than this,
 And that sharp zest of sinning
 The innocent miss ;

They might know fuller life,
 And, should fortune befriend,
 Escape the Law's pains
 From beginning to end ;
 Or, if they should fail,
 What for them does home bring
 Which should make of a prison
 So dreadful a thing ?
 These children, whom formalists,
 Narrow and stern,
 Have denied what high principle
 Comes from to learn ;
 To whom this great empire,
 Whose records they cry,
 Is a book sealed as close
 As the ages gone by ;
 Who bear a name great
 Among nations of earth,
 But are English alone
 By the fortune of birth ;
 These young mouths that come
 To a board well-nigh bare,
 Who elsewhere were riches,
 But here a grave care.

Great Empire ! fast bound
 By invisible bands,
 That convey to earth's limits
 Thy rulers' commands ;
 Who sittest alone
 By thy rude northern sea,
 On an ocean-built throne,
 The first home of the free,
 Whom thy tall chimneys shroud
 In a life-giving gloom ;
 Who clothest mankind
 With the work of thy loom ;
 Who o'er all seas dost send out
 Thy deep-laden ships ;
 Who teachest all nations
 The words of thy lips ;
 Who despatchest thy viceroys
 Imperially forth

To the palms of thy East
 And the snows of thy North ;
 Who governest millions
 Of dark subtle men
 By the might of just laws
 And the sword of the pen :
 Who art planted wherever
 A white foot may tread,
 On the poisonous land
 Which for ages lies dead ;
 Who didst nourish the freeman
 With milk from thy breast,
 To the measureless Commonwealth
 Lording the West ;
 Who holdest to-day
 Of those once subject lands
 A remnant too mighty
 For weaker hands ;
 Who in thy isle-continent,
 Yearly increased,
 Rearest empires of freemen
 To sway the far East ;
 Who art set on lone islets
 Of palm and of spice,
 On deserts of sand
 And on mountains of ice :
 Who bring'st Freedom wherever
 Thy flag is unfurled :
 The exemplar, the envy,
 The crown of the World !

What is't thou dost owe
 To these young lives of thine,
 What else but to foster
 This dim spark divine ?
 Think of myriads like these,
 Without teaching or home,
 Who with pitiful accents
 Beseeching thee come :
 Think how Time, whirling on,
 Time that never may rest,
 Brings the strength of the loins
 And the curve of the breast,

Till, with poor minds still childish,
 These children are grown
 To the age that shall give them
 Young lives of their own ;
 Think of those, who to-day
 In the sweet country air
 Live, as soulless, almost,
 As the birds which they scare ;
 Think of all those for whom,
 To the immature brain,
 The dull whirr of the loom
 Brings a throbbing of pain ;
 Think of countless lives fallen,
 Sunk, never to rise,
 For the lack of the warning
 Their country denies,—
 Fallen, ruined, and lost,
 Through all time that shall be,
 Fallen for ever and lost
 To themselves and to thee ;—
 Thou who standest, girt round
 By strong foes on each side,
 Foes who envy thy greatness,
 Thy glory, thy pride ;
 Thou, who surely shalt need
 Heart and soul, brain and hand,
 Brain to plan, hand to bleed,
 For thy might, O dear land !

* * *

Till, while slowly he ponders
 These thoughts in his brain,
 See ! there swiftly comes rushing
 A young troop again.

“ Terrible accident ;
 Frightful explosion, Sir ;
 News, Sir, from Germany ;
 Latest from India ;
 Special edition, Sir,
 Only one half-penny ! ”

Thus the revoluble
Assonant Echo.

Again they rush breathlessly ;
Dashing and hurrying,
Frighting the passer-by,
Shouting and volleying,
Bright boys vociferous,
Girl-children clamorous,
On till they meet again
Some vague philosopher.

SOULS IN PRISON.

I THOUGHT that I looked on the land
of the lost,
A stony desert, arid and bare,
Gray under a heavy air.

Not a bird was there, nor a flower, nor
a tree,
Nor rushing river, nor sounding sea ;
And I seemed to myself like a ghost.

A land of shadows, a herbless plain,
A faint light aslant on the barren
ground,
And never a sight nor a sound :

Only at times, of invisible feet,
Wearily tracking one dull, sad beat,
Too spiritless to complain ;

And of faces hid by a blank white mask,
From which there glared out cavernous
eyes,
Full of hate and revolt and lies :

As if the green earth on which others
live
Had nothing of hope or of fear to give
But a hopeless, perpetual task.

Far in the distance a vast gray pile
Stretched out its spider-like, echoing
ways

In long centrifugal rays ;

And sometimes dimly I seemed to see
Dumb gangs of poor workers, fruitless !—
Bent in hard tasks useless and vile,

To which, issuing silent, in single rank,
Along narrow pathways stony and blank
The hopeless toilers would come.

Or else each was idly cooped in a cell
Narrow, and gloomy, and hard, as hell,
Which was all that they knew of home.

And around them frowning, grimy and
tall,
With no ivy or lichen, a circling wall
Shut God and life utterly out ;

And in the midst, with unclosing eye,
A muffled watcher stood silently,
As they paced about and about.

Never alone—for, wherever they went,
From some central tower an eye was
bent
Along all the long, straight-drawn
ways.

Never alone—for an unseen eye,
As the stealthy footstep went noiselessly
by,
Swept each lonely cell with its gaze.

Always alone—for in all the throng
No word or glance as they shuffled
along
But the order-word, sharp and loud.

Always alone—for in all the crowd
No glance of comfort from pitying eyes
Might pierce through the thick disguise.

Nor, if husband were there, or child, or wife,
Could the subtle communion of love and life
Escape that terrible eye.

Vet husbands and wives and children there were,
Young limbs, and age bent in a dumb despair,
Too strong or too weak to die.

Nothing remained, as it seemed, but thought
Of the old hopes vanished and come to nought,

And the hopeless, perpetual care,—

Nought but to sit, as the night would fall,
Tracing black ghosts on the blank white wall
In a silent rage of despair;

Or, before the dull daylight began to break,
To start at the iron-tongued summons and wake
To the curse of another day.

And so, in silence, to brood and plot
To regain the poor freedom and life which were not,

Though it bartered a soul away;

Or, later, to cherish the old offence
With a secret lurking devil of sense,
And a spring of desire self-bent,

Till at last all longing was sunk and spent
In a lifeless, fathomless slough of content.

Not repentance, nor fear, nor grief,

Nor belief at all, nor yet unbelief ;
But a soul which skulks from itself like a thief,

And is damned for ever and dead.

* * * *

Thus I thought to myself ; and, though straight I saw
It was only the house of retributive Law,
I shuddered and shrank, and fled.

A SEPARATION DEED.

WHEREAS we twain, who still are bound for life,

Who took each other for better and for worse,
Are now plunged deep in hate and bitter strife,
And all our former love is grown a curse ;

So that 'twere better, doubtless, we should be

In loneliness, so that we were apart,
Nor in each other's changed eyes looking, see

The cold reflection of an alien heart :
To this insensate parchment we reveal Our joint despair, and seal it with our seal.

Forgetting the dear days not long ago,
When we walked slow by starlight through the corn :

Forgetting, since our hard fate wills it so,

All but our parted lives and souls
forlorn ;
Forgetting the sweet fettters strong to bind
Which childish fingers forge and baby smiles,
Our common pride to watch the growing mind,
Our common joy in childhood's simple wiles,
The common tears we shed, the kiss we gave,
Standing beside the open little grave ;

Forgetting these and more, if to forget Be possible, as we would fain indeed.
And if the past be not too deeply set In our two hearts, with roots that, touched, will bleed
Yet, could we cheat by any pretext fair The world, if not ourselves—'twere so far well—
We would not put our bonds from us, and bare
To careless eyes the secrets of our hell ; So this indenture witnesseth that we, As follows here, do solemnly agree.

We will take each our own, and will abide
Separate from bed and board for all our life ;
Whatever chance of weal or woe betide, Naught shall re-knit the husband and the wife.
Though one grow gradually poor and weak,
The other, lapt in luxury, will not heed ;
Though one, in mortal pain, the other seek,
The other may not answer to the need ;

We, who through long years did together rest
In wedlock, heart to heart, and breast to breast.

One shall the daughter take, and one the boy,—
Poor boy, who shall not hear his mother's name,
Nor feel her kiss ; poor girl, for whom the joy Of her sire's smile is changed for sullen shame :
Brother and sister, who, if they should meet, With faces strange, amid the careless crowd,
Will feel their hearts beat with no quicker beat,
Nor inward voice of kinship calling loud :
Two widowed lives, whose fulness may not come ;
Two orphan lives, knowing but half of home.

We have not told the tale, nor will, indeed,
Of dissonance, whether cruel wrong or crime,
Or sum of petty injuries which breed The hate of hell when multiplied by time,
Dishonour, falsehood, jealous fancies, blows,
Which in one moment wedded souls can sunder ;
But, since our yoke intolerable grows, Therefore we set our seals and souls as under :
Witness the powers of Wrong and Hate and Death.
And this Indenture also witnesseth.

SONG.

THEY mount from glory to glory,
They sink from deep unto deep,
They proclaim their sweet passionate
story,

They tremble on chords that weep,
And with them my soul spreads her
wings,
And my heart goes out to them and
sings.

And chord within chord interlaces,
Like the leaves that protect some
fair bloom ;
And with subtle and tremulous graces,
And tender lights dappled with
gloom,
Like the fall of an ocean-borne bell,
The harmonies quicken and swell.

Then swift from those languishing voices
And accents which marry and die,
Like the sound of a trumpet, rejoices
One clear note unsaltering, high,
And my soul, through its magical power,
Bursts and dies like an aloe in flower.

FREDERIC.

As these sheets came in from the
printer,
My lad who had brought me them
said,
“ Please, Sir, as I passed his office,
They told me that Frederic was
dead.”

And I knew in a moment thrill through
me,
A keen little sorrow and smart,

Then a sudden revolt and rebellion
Assail me and fetter my heart,

As he went on with boyish prattle,
Before I had courage to speak :
“ He died of consumption, they said,
Sir ;
And he earned sixteen shillings a
week.”

“ How old was he ? ” “ Just seventeen,
Sir :
He had grown very tall and white.”
And I thought of the childish features,
The bright cheeks, and eyes still more
bright,

When, withdrawn from his school far
too early,
He came with his treasured prize,
To show to his new-found master,
With a simple pride in his eyes ;

And how it soon proved that his writing
Was so clear, and skilful, and fine,
That I set him the task to decipher
The hieroglyphs which are mine.

’Twas four years ago, and so splendid
Did my first book of songs appear,
That, though oftentimes already rejected,
I sent them forth then without fear.

Nor in vain. For now many minds
know them,
And many are kindly in praise,
But the cold little hand that adorned
them
Has cast up the sum of its days !

Sixteen shillings ! this pittance could
purchase
The flower of those boyish years !

This could give to that humble ambition
Dull entries, whose total is tears !

Poor young life which was bursting to blossom,
Which had borne its own fruitage one day,
Had those budding years mingled together
Slow labour with healthfuller play !

Is it man that has done this, or rather,
These dead blasts that blow, blow,
blow, blow,
Week by week, month by month, till beneath them
Life withers and pulses beat slow ?

The dull winds that to-day are slaying
Young and old with their poisonous breath,
Which slew the rash singer who praised them,
Not the less with a premature death.

Is it man with bad laws and fools' customs,
False pride, poverty, ignorant greed ?
Is it God making lives for His pleasure,
Dooms these innocent victims to bleed ?

Great riddle which one day shall be clearer,
Be our doubts with all reverence said ;
But a strong power constrained me to write them,
When I heard little Frederic was dead.

TO MY MOTHERLAND.

DEAR motherland, forgive me, if too long
I hold the halting tribute of my song ;
Letting my wayward fancy idly roam
Far, far from thee, my early home.
There are some things too near,
Too infinitely dear
For speech ; the old ancestral hearth,
The hills, the vales that saw our birth,
Are hallowed deep within the reverent breast :
And who of these keeps silence, he is best.

Yet would not I appear,
Who have known many a brighter land
and sea
Since first my boyish footsteps went from thee,
The less to hold thee dear ;
Or lose in newer beauties the immense
First love for thee, O birth-land, which fulfils
My inmost heart and soul,—
Love for thy smiling and sequestered vales,
Love for thy winding streams which sparkling roll
Through thy rich fields, dear Wales,
From long perspectives of thy folded hills.

Ay ! these are sacred, all ;
I cannot sing of them, too near they are.
What if from out thy dark yews, gazing far,
I sat and sang, Llangunnor ! of the vale
Through which fair Towy winds her lingering fall,

Gliding by Dynevor's wood-crowned steep,
An.l, alternating swift with deep,
By park and tower a living thing
Of loveliness meandering ;
And traced her flowing, onward still,
By Grongar dear to rhyme, or Drys-
llwyn's castled hill,
Till the fresh upward tides prevail,
Which stay her stream and bring the
sea-borne sail,
And the broad river rolls majestic down
Beneath the gray walls of my native
town.

Would not my fancy quickly stray
To thee, sea-girt St. David's, far away,
A minster on the deep ; or, further
still,
To you, grand mountains, which the
stranger knows :
Eryri throned amid the clouds and
snows,
The dark lakes, the wild passes of the
north ;
Or Cader, a stern sentinel looking forth
Over the boisterous main ; or thee,
dear Isle
Not lovely, yet which canst my thought
beguile—
Mona, from whose fresh wind-swept
pastures came
My grandsire, bard and patriot, like in
name
Whose verse his countrymen still love
to sing
At bidding-feast or rustic junketing ?
Ah, no ! too near for song, and ye too
near,

My brethren of the ancient race and
tongue ;
The bardic measures deep, the sweet
songs sung
At congresses, which fan the sacred fire
Which did of old your ancestors inspire ;
The simple worship sternly pure,
The faith unquestioning and sure,
Which doth the priest despise and his
dark ways,
And riseth best to fullest praise
Beneath some humble roof-tree, rude
and bare,
Or through the mountains' unpolluted
air ;
Who know not violence nor blood,
And who, if sometimes ye decline from
good,
Sin the soft sins which gentler spirits
move,
Which warmer Fancy breeds, and too
much love.

I may not sing of you,
Or tell my love—others there are who
will,
Who haply bear not yet a love so true
As that my soul doth fill—
If to applause it lead, or gain, or fame ;
Better than this it were to bear the
pain
Which comes to higher spirits when
they know
They fire in other souls no answering
glow ;
Love those who love me not again,
And leave my country naught, not even
a name.

THE EPIC OF HADES.

BOOK I.

TARTARUS.

IN February, when the dawn was slow,
And winds lay still, I gazed upon the
fields
Which stretched before me, lifeless,
and the stream
Which laboured in the distance to the
sea,
Sullen and cold. No force of fancy
took
My thought to bloomy June, when all
the land
Lay deep in crested grass, and through
the dew
The landrail brushed, and the lush
banks were lit
With strawberries, and the hot noise
of bees
Wooed the chaste flowers. Rather I
seemed to move
Thro' that weird land, Hellenic fancy
feigned,
Beyond the fabled river and the bark
Of Charon; and forthwith on every side
Rose the thin throng of ghosts.
First thro' the gloom
Of a dark grove I strayed—a sluggish
wood,
Where scarce the faint fires of the
setting stars,
Or some cold gleam of half-discovered
dawn,

Might pierce the darkling pines. A
twilight drear
Brooded o'er all the depths, and filled
the dank
And sunken hollows of the rocks with
shapes
Of terror,—beckoning hands and noise-
less feet
Flitting from shade to shade, wide eyes
that stared
With horror, and dumb mouths which
seemed to cry,
Yet cried not. An ineffable despair
Hung over them and that dark world
and took
The gazer captive, and a mingled pang
Of grief and anger, grown to fierce
revolt
And hatred of the Invisible Force
which holds
The issue of our lives and binds us fast
Within the net of Fate; as the fisher
takes
The little quivering sea-things from the
sea
And flings them gasping on the beach
to die
Then spreads his net for more. And
then again
I knew myself and those, creatures who
lie

Safe in the strong grasp of Unchanging
 Law,
 Encompassed round by hands unseen,
 and chains
 Which do support the feeble life that
 else
 Were spent on barren space ; and thus
 I came
 To look with less of horror, more of
 thought,
 And bore to see the sight of pain that
 yet
 Should grow to healing, when the con-
 crete stain
 Of life and act were purged, and the
 cleansed soul,
 Renewed by the slow wear and waste
 of time,
 Soared after aeons of days.
 They seemed alone,
 Those prisoners, thro' all time. Each
 soul shut fast
 In its own jail of woe, apart, alone,
 For evermore alone ; no thought of
 kin,
 Or kindly human glance, or fellowship
 Of suffering or of sin, made light the
 load
 Of solitary pain. Ay, though they
 walked
 Together, or were prisoned in one cell
 With the partners of their wrong, or
 with strange souls
 Which the same Furies tore, they knew
 them not,
 But suffered still alone ; as in that
 shape
 Of hell, fools build on earth, where
 hopeless sin
 Rots slow in solitude, nor sees the
 face
 Of men, nor hears the sound of speech,
 nor feels

The touch of human hand, but broods
 a ghost,
 Hating the bare blank cell—the other
 self,
 Which brought it thither—hating man
 and God,
 And all that is or has been.

 A great fear
 And pity froze my blood, who seemed
 to see
 A half-remembered form.
 An Eastern King
 It was who lay in pain. He wore a
 crown
 Upon his aching brow, and his white
 robe
 Was jewelled with fair gems of price,
 the signs
 Of pomp and honour and all luxury,
 Which might prevent desire. But as I
 looked
 There came a hunger in the gloating
 eyes,
 "
 A quenchless thirst upon the parching
 lips,
 And such unsatisfied strainings in the
 hands
 Stretched idly forth on what I could
 not see,
 Some fatal food of fancy ; that I knew
 The undying worm of sense, which frets
 and gnaws
 The unsatisfied stained soul.
 Seeing me, he said :
 "What ? And art thou too damned
 as I ? Dost know
 This thirst as I, and see as I the cool
 Lymph drawn from thee and mock
 thy lips ; and parch

For ever in continual thirst ; and mark
The fair fruit offered to thy hunger
fade
Before thy longing eyes ? I thought
there was
No other as I thro' all the weary
lengths
Of Time the gods have made, who
pined so long
And found fruition mock him.

Long ago,

When I was young on earth, 'twas a
sweet pain
To ride all day in the long chase, and
feel
Toil and the summer fire my blood and
parch
My lips, while in my father's halls I
knew
The cool bath waited, with its marble
floor ;
And juices from the ripe fruits pressed,
and chilled
With snows from far-off peaks ; and
troops of slaves ;
And music and the dance ; and fair
young forms,
And dalliance, and every joy of
sense,
That haunts the dreams of youth, which
strength and ease
Corrupt, and vacant hours. Ay, it
was sweet
For a while to plunge in these, as fair
boys plunge
Naked in summer streams, all veil of
shame
Laid by, only the young dear body
bathed
And sunk in its delight, while the firm
earth,
The soft green pastures gay with innocent flowers,

Or sober harvest fields, show like a
dream ;
And nought is left, but the young life
which floats
Upon the depths of death, to sink,
maybe,
And drown in pleasure, or rise at length
grown wise
And gain the abandoned shore.

Ah, but at last

The swift desire burns stronger and
more strong,
And feeding on itself, grows tyrannous ;
And the parched soul no longer finds
delight
In the cool stream of old ; nay, this
itself,
Smitten by the fire of sense as by a
flame,
Holds not its coolness more ; and
fevered limbs,
Seeking the fresh tides of their youth,
may find
No more refreshment, but a cauldron
fired
With the fires of nether hell ; and a
black rage
Usurps the soul, and drives it on to
slake
Its thirst with crime and blood.

Longing Desire !

Unsatisfied, sick, impotent Desire !
Oh, I have known it ages long. I
knew
Its pain on earth ere yet my life had
grown
To its full stature, thro' the weary
years
Of manhood, nay, in age itself ; I
knew
The selfsame weary thirst, unsatisfied
By all the charms of sense, by wealth
and power

And homage ; always craving, never quenched—
The undying curse of the soul ! The ministers
And agents of my will drove far and wide
Over all lands and seas, seeking to find
Fresh pleasures for me, who had spent my sum
Of pleasure, and had power, not even in thought,
Nor faculty to enjoy. They tore apart
The sacred claustral doors of home for me,
Despoiled the inviolate hearth for me, laid waste
The flower of humble lives, in hope to heal
The sickly fancies of the King, till rose
A cry of pain from all the land ; and I
Grew happier for it, since I held the power
To quench desire in blood.

But even thus
The old pain faded not, but swift again
Revived ; and thro' the sensual dull lengths
Of my seraglios I stalked, and marked
The glitter of the gems, the precious webs
Plundered from every clime by cruel wars
That strewed the sands with corpses ; lovely eyes
That looked no look of love, and fired no more
Thoughts of the flesh ; rich meats, and fruits, and wines
Grown flat and savourless ; and loathed them all,
And only cared for power ; content to shed

Rivers of innocent blood, if only thus I might appease my thirst. Until I grew
A monster gloating over blood and pain.
Ah, weary, weary days, when every sense
Was satisfied, and nothing left to slake
The parched unhappy soul, except to watch
The writhing limbs and mark the slow blood drip,
Drop after drop, as the life ebbed with it ;
In a new thrill of lust, till blood itself Paled on me, and I knew the fiend I was,
Yet cared not—I who was, brief years ago,
Only a careless boy lapt round with ease,
Stretched by the soft and stealing tide of sense
Which now grew red ; nor ever dreamed at all
What Furies lurked beneath it, but had shrunk
In indolent horror from the sight of tears
And misery, and felt my inmost soul Sicken with the thought of blood.
There comes a time
When the insatiate brute within the man,
Weary with wallowing in the mire, leaps forth
Devouring, and the cloven satyr-hoof Grows to the rending claw, and the lewd leer
To the horrible fanged snarl, and the soul sinks
And leaves the man a devil, all his sin

Grown savourless, and yet he longs to sin
And longs in vain for ever.

Yet, methinks,
It was not for the gods to leave me thus.

I stinted not their worship, building shrines
To all of them; the Goddess of Love I served
With hecatombs, letting the fragrant fumes
Of incense and the costly steam ascend
From victims year by year; nay, my own son
Pelops, my best beloved, I gave to them
Offering, as he must offer who would gain
The great gods' grace, my dearest.

I had gained
Through long and weary orgies that strange sense
Of nothingness and wasted days which blights
The exhausted life, bearing upon its front
Counterfeit knowledge, when the bitter ash
Of Evil, which the sick soul loathes, appears
Like the pure fruit of Wisdom. I had grown
As wizards seem, who mingle sensual rites
And forms impure with murderous spells and dark
Enchantments; till the simple people held
My very weakness wisdom, and believed
That in my blood-stained palace-halls, withdrawn,

I kept the inner mysteries of Zeus
And knew the secret of all Being; who was
A sick and impotent wretch, so sick,
so tired,
That even bloodshed palled.
For my stained soul,
Knowing its sin, hastened to purge itself
With every rite and charm which the dark lore
Of priestcraft offered to it. Spells obscene,
The blood of innocent babes, sorceries foul
Muttered at midnight—these could occupy
My weary days; till all my people shrank
To see me, and the mother clasped her child
Who heard the monster pass.
They would not hear,
They listened not—the cold ungrateful gods—
For all my supplications; nay, the more
I sought them were they hidden.
At the last
A dark voice whispered nightly:
'Thou, poor wretch,
That art so sick and impotent, thyself
The source of all thy misery, the great gods
Ask a more precious gift and excellent
Than alien victims which thou prizest not
And givest without a pang. But shouldst thou take
Thy costliest and fairest offering,
'Twere otherwise. The life which thou hast given

Thou mayst recall. Go, offer at the shrine

Thy best beloved Pelops, and appease
Zeus and the averted gods, and know again

The youth and joy of yore.'

Night after night,
While all the halls were still, and the cold stars

Were fading into dawn, I lay awake
Distraught with warring thoughts, my throbbing brain

Filled with that dreadful voice. I had not shrunk

From blood, but this, the strong son of my youth—

How should I dare this thing? And all day long

I would steal from sight of him and men, and fight

Against the dreadful thought, until the voice

Scared all my burning brain, and clammed, 'Kill!

Zeus bids thee, and be happy.' Then I rose

At midnight, when the halls were still, and raised

The arras, and stole soft to where my son

Lay sleeping. For one moment on his face

And stalwart limbs I gazed, and marked the rise

And fall of his young breast, and the soft plume

Which drooped upon his brow, and felt a thrill

Of yearning; but the cold voice urging me

Burned me like fire. Three times I gazed and turned

Irresolute, till last it thundered at me,

'Strike, fool! thou art in hell; strike, fool! and lose

The burden of thy chains.' Then with slow step

I crept as creeps the tiger on the deer,
Raised high my arm, shut close my eyes,
and plunged

My dagger in his heart.

And then, with a flash,
The veil fell downward from my life and left

Myself to me—the daily sum of sense—
The long continual trouble of desire—
The stain of blood blotting the stain of lust—

The weary soulness of my days, which wrecked

My heart and brain, and left me at the last

A madman and accursed; and I knew,
Far higher than the sensual slope which held

The gods whom erst I worshipped, a white peak

Of Purity, and a stern voice pealing doom—

Not the mad voice of old—which pierced so deep

Within my life, that with the reeking blade

Wet with the heart's blood of my child I smote

My guilty heart in twain.

Ah! fool, to dream
That the long stain of time might fade and merge

In one poor chrism of blood. They taught of yore,

My priests who flattered me—nor knew at all

The greater God I know, who sits afar Beyond those earthly shapes, passionless, pure,

And awful as the Dawn--that the gods
cared
For costly victims, drinking in the
steam
Of sacrifice when the choice hecatombs
Were offered for my wrong. Ah no !
there is
No recompense in these, nor any charm
To cleanse the stain of sin, but the long
wear
Of suffering, when the soul which
seized too much
Of pleasure here, grows righteous by
the pain
That doth redress its ill. For what is
Right
But equipoise of Nature, alternating
The Too Much and Too Little? Not
on earth
The salutary silent forces work
Their final victory, but year on year
Passes, and age on age, and leaves the
debt
Unsatisfied, while the o'erburdened
soul
Unloads itself in pain.
Therefore it is
I suffer as I suffered ere swift death
Set me not free, no otherwise ; and yet
There comes a healing purpose in my
pain
I never knew on earth ; nor ever here
The once-loved evil grows, only the
tale
Of penalties grown greater hourly
dwarfs
The accomplished sum of wrong. And
yet desire
Pursues me still—sick, impotent desire,
Fiercer than that of earth.
We are ourselves
Our heaven and hell, the joy, the
penalty,

The yearning, the fruition. Earth is
hell
Or heaven, and yet not only earth ; but
still,
After the swift soul leaves the gates of
death,
The pain grows deeper and less mixed,
the joy
Purer and less alloyed, and we are
damned
Or blest, as we have lived."

He ceased, with a wail
Like some complaining wind among
the pines
Or pent among the fretful ocean caves,
A sick, sad sound.

Then as I looked, I saw
His eyes glare horribly, his dry parched
lips
Open, his weary hands stretch idly
forth
As if to clutch the air—infinite pain
And mockery of hope. "Seest thou
them now ?"
He said. "I thirst, I parch, I famish,
yet
They still elude me, fair and tempting
fruit
And cooling waters. Now they come
again.
See, they are in my grasp, they are at
my lips,
Now I shall quench me. Nay, again
they fly
And mock me. Seest thou them, or
am I shut
From hope for ever, hungering, thirst-
ing still,
A madman and in Hell?"

And as I passed
In horror, his large eyes and straining
hands
Froze all my soul with pity.

Then it was
 A woman whom I saw : a dark pale
 Queen,
 With passion in her eyes, and fear and
 pain
 Holding her steadfast gaze, like one
 who sees
 Some dreadful deed of wrong worked
 out and knows
 Himself the cause, yet now is powerless
 To stay the wrong he would.
 Seeing me gaze
 In pity on her woe, she turned and spake
 With a low wailing voice—

“ Thou well mayst gaze
 With horror on me, sir, for I am lost ;
 I have shed the innocent blood, long
 years ago,
 Nay, centuries of pain. I have shed
 the blood
 Of him I loved, and found for recom-
 pense
 But self-inflicted death and age-long
 woe,
 Which purges not my sin. And yet
 not I
 It was who did it, but the gods, who
 took
 A woman’s loveless heart and tortured it
 With love as with a fire. It was not I
 Who slew my love, but Fate. Fate
 ’twas which brought
 My love and me together, Fate which
 barred
 The path of blameless love, yet set
 Love’s flame
 To burn and smoulder in a hopeless
 heart,
 Where no relief might come.

The King was old,
 And I a girl. ‘Tis an old tale which
 runs
 Thro’ the sad ages, and ‘twas mine.
 He had spent
 His sum of love long since, and I—I
 knew not
 A breath of Love as yet. Ah, it is
 strange
 To lose the sense of maidenhood, drink
 deep
 Of life to the very dregs, and yet not
 know
 A flutter of Love’s wing. Love takes
 no thought
 For pomp, or palace, or respect of men ;
 Nor always in the stately marriage bed,
 Closed round by silken curtains, laid
 on down,
 Nestles a rosy form ; but ‘mid wild
 flowers
 Or desert tents, or in the hind’s low
 cot,
 Beneath the aspect of the unconscious
 stars,
 Dwells all night and is blest.
 My love, my life !
 He was the old man’s son, a fair white
 soul—
 Not like the others, whom the fire of
 youth
 Burns like a flame and hurries unrestrained
 Thro’ riotous days and nights, but
 virginal
 And pure as any maid. No careless
 glance
 He deigned for all the maidens young
 and fair
 Who sought their Prince’s eye. But
 evermore,
 On the high pastures wandering alone,
 He dwelt unwed ; weaving to Artemis,

Fairest of all Olympian maids, a wreath
From the unpolluted meads, where
 never herd
Drives his white flock, nor ever scythe
 has come,
But the bee sails upon unfettered wing
Over the spring-like lawns, and Purity
Waters them with soft dews ; * and
 yet he showed
Of all his peers most manly—heart and
 soul
A very man, tender and true, and strong
And pitiful, and in his limbs and mien
Fair as Apollo's self.
It was at first
In Troezen that I saw him, when he came
To greet his sire. Amid the crowd of
 youths
He showed a Prince indeed ; yet knew
 I not
Whom 'twas I saw, nor that I held the
 place
Which was his mother's, only from the
 throng
Love, with a barbed dart aiming, pierced
 my heart
Ere yet I knew what ailed me. Every
 glance
Fired me ; the youthful grace, the tall
 straight limbs,
The swelling sinewy arms, the large
 dark eyes
Tender yet full of passion, the thick
 locks
Tossed from his brow, the lip and cheek
 which bore
The down of early manhood, seemed
 to feed
My heart with short-lived joy.

For when he stood
Forth from the throng and knelt before
 his sire,

* *Euripides, "Hippolytus," lines 70-78.*

Then raised his gaze to mine, I felt the
 curse
Of Aphrodité burn me, as it burned
My mother before me, and I dared not
 meet
His innocent, frank young eyes.
 Said I then young ?
Ay, but not young as mine. But I had
 known
The secret things of life, which age the
 soul
In a moment, writing on its front their
 mark
'Too early ripe ; ' and he was innocent,
My spouse in fitted years, within whose
 arms
I had defied the world.
I turned away
Like some white bird that leaves the
 flock, which sails
High in mid air above the haunts of
 men,
Feeling some little dart within her
 breast,
Not death, but like to death, and slowly
 sinks
Down to the earth alone, and bears her
 hurt
Unseen, by herbless sand and bitter
 pool,
And pines until the end.
Even from that day
I strove to gain his love. Nay, 'twas
 not I,
But the cruel gods who drove me. Day
 by day
We were together ; for in days of old
Women were free, not pent in gilded
 jails
As afterwards, but free to walk alone,
For good or evil, free. I hardly took
Thought for my spouse, the King. For
 I had sound

My love at last : what matter if it
were
A guilty love ? Yet love is love indeed,
Stronger than heaven or hell. Day
after day
I set myself to tempt him from his
proud
And innocent way, for I had spurned
aside
Care for the gods or men—all but my
love.

What need to tell the tale? Was it
a sigh,
A blush, a momentary glance, which
brought
Assurance of my triumph ? It is long
Since I have lived, I cannot tell ; I
know
Only the penalty of death and hell
Which followed on my sin. I knew he
loved.
It was not wonderful, seeing that we
dwelt
A boy and girl together. I was fair,
And Eros tried my eyes and lent my
voice
His own soft tremulous tones. But
when our souls
Trembled upon the verge, and fancy
feigned
His arms around me as we fled alone
To some free land of exile, came a
scroll ;
'Dearest, it may not be ; I fear the
Gods ;
We dare not do this wrong. I go from
hence
And see thy face no more. Farewell !
Forget
The love we may not own ; go, seek for
both
Forgiveness from the gods.'

When I read the words,
The cruel words, methought my heart
stood still,
And when the ebbing life returned I
seemed
To have lost all thought of Love. Only
Revenge
Dwelt with me still, the fiercer that I
knew
My long-prized hope, which came so
near success,
Snatched from me and for ever.

When I rose
From my deep swoon, I bade a mes-
senger
Go, seek the King for me. He came
and sate
Beside my couch, and all the doors
were closed,
And all withdrawn. Then with the
liar's art,
And hypocrite tears, and feigned re-
luctancy,
And all the subtle wiles a woman draws
From the armoury of hate, I did instil
The poison on his soul. Cunning
devices,
False grief, false anger with his son,
regrets,
And half confessions—these, with hate-
ful skill
Confused together, drove the old man's
brain
To frenzy ; and I watched him, with a
sneer,
Turn to a dotard thirsting for the life
Of his own child. But how to do the
deed,
Yet shed no blood, nor know the
people's hate,
Who loved the Prince, I knew not.
Till one day
The old man, looking out upon the sea,

Besought the dread Poseidon to avenge
The treachery of his son. And as we
stood

Gazing upon the breathless blue, a cloud
Rose from the deep, a little fleecy cloud,
Which sudden grew and grew, and
turned the blue

To purple; and a keen wind rose and
sang

Higher and higher, and the wine-dark
sea

Grew ruffled, and within the circling
bay

The tiny ripples, stealing up the sand,
Plunged loud with manes of foam, until
they swelled

To misty surges thundering on the shore.

Then at the old man's elbow as I
stood,

A deep dark thought, sent by the powers
of ill,

An-wering, as now I know, my own
black hate

And not my poor dupe's anger, fired my
soul

And bade me speak. 'The god has
heard thy prayer,'

I whispered; 'See the surge which
wakes and swells

To fury; well I know what things shall
be.'

It is Poseidon's voice sounds in the
storm

And sends thy vengeance. Young Hippo-
lytus

Loves, as thou knowest, on the yellow
sand,

Hard by the rippled margin of the wave,
To urge his flying steeds. Bid him go
forth—

He will obey—and see what recompense
The god will send his wrong.

In the old man's eyes
A watery gleam of malice played
awhile—

I hate him for it—and he bade his son,
Yoking his three young fiery colts, drive
forth

His chariot on the sand.

And still the storm
Blew fiercer and more fierce, and the
white crests

Plunged on the strand, and the loud
promontories

Thundered back repercuive, and a
mist

Of foam, torn landward, hid the sound-
ing shore.

Then saw I him come forth and bid
them yoke

His untamed colts. I had not seen his
face

Since that last day, but, seeing him, I
felt

The old love spring anew, yet mixed
with hate—

A storm of warring passions. Tho' I
knew

What end should come, yet would I
speak n^t word

That might avert it. The old man
looked forth;

I think he had well-nigh forgotten all
The wrong he fancied and the doom he
prayed,

All but the father's pride in the strong
son,

Who was so young and bold. I saw a
smile

Upon the dotard's face, when now the
steeds

Were harnessed and the chariot, on the
sand

Along the circling margin of the bay,

Flew, swift as light. A sudden gleam
of sun
Flashed on the silver harness as it went,
Burned on the brazen axles of the
wheels,
And on the golden fillets of the Prince
Doubled the gold. Sometimes a larger
wave
Would dash in mist around him, and in
fear
The rearing coursers plunged, and then
again
The strong young arm constrained
them, and they flashed
To where the wave-worn foreland ends
the bay.

And then he turned his chariot, a
bright speck
Now seen, now hidden, but always,
tho' the surge
Broke round it, safe; emerging like a
star
From the white clouds of foam. And
as I watched,
Speaking no word, and breathing scarce
a breath,
I saw the firm limbs strongly set apart
Upon the chariot, and the reins held
high,
And the proud head bent forward, with
long locks
Streaming behind, as nearer and more
near
The swift team rushed—until, with a
half joy,
It seemed as if my love might yet elude
The slow sure anger of the god, dull
wrath
Swayed by a woman's lie.

But on the verge,
As I cast my eyes, a vast and purple
wall

Swelled swiftly towards the land; the
lesser waves
Sank as it came, and to its toppling
crest
The spume-flecked waters, from the
strand drawn back,
Left dry the yellow shore. Onward it
came,
Hoarse, capped with breaking foam,
lurid, immense,
Rearing its dreadful height. The
chariot sped
Nearer and nearer. I could see my love
With the light of victory in his eyes,
the smile
Of daring on his lips: so near he came
To where the marble palace-wall con-
fined
The narrow strip of beach—his brave
young eyes
Fixed steadfast on the goal, in the pride
of life,
Without a thought of death. I strove
to cry,
But terror choked my breath. Then,
like a bull
Upon the windy level of the plain
Lashing himself to rage, the furious
wave,
Poising itself a moment, tossing high
Its bristling crest dashed downward on
the strand.
With a stamp, with a rush, with a roar.
And when I looked,
The shore, the fields, the plain, were
one white sea
Of churning, seething foam—chariot
and steeds
Gone, and my darling on the wild mad
surge
Tossed high, whirled down, beaten,
and bruised, and flung,
Dying upon the marble.

My great love Hating my life and cursing men and
 Sprang up redoubled, and cast out my gods,
 hate I did myself to death.
 And spurned all thought of fear ; and But even here,
 down the stair I find my punishment. Oh, terrible
 I hurried, and upon the bleeding form doom
 I threw myself, and raised his head, Of souls like mine ! To see their evil
 and clasped done
 His body to mine, and kissed him on Always before their eyes, the one dread
 the lips, scene
 And in his dying ear confessed my Of horror. See, the wild wave on the
 wrong, verge
 And saw the horror in his dying eyes Towers horrible, and he— Oh, Love,
 And knew that I was damned. And my Love !
 when he breathed Safety is near ! quick ! quicker ! urge
 His last pure breath, I rose and slowly them on !
 spake— Thou wilt 'scape it yet !—Nay, nay, it
 Turned to a Fury now by love and bursts on him !
 pain— I have shed the innocent blood ! Oh,
 To the old man who knelt, while all dreadful gaze
 the throng Within his glazing eyes ! Hide them,
 Could hear my secret : 'See, thou fool, ye gods !
 I am
 The murdereress of thy son, and thou my Hide them ! I cannot bear them.
 dupe, Quick ! a dagger !
 Thou and thy gods. See, he was I will lose their glare in death. Nay,
 innocent ; die I cannot ;
 I murdered him for love. I scorn ye all, I must endure and live—Death brings
 Thee and thy gods together, who are not peace
 deceived To the lost souls in Hell."
 And her eyes stared,
 By a woman's lying tongue ! Oh, Rounded with horror, and she stooped
 doting fool, and gazed
 To hate thy own ! And ye, false So eagerly, and pressed her severed hands
 powers, which punish Upon her trembling forehead with such
 The innocent, and let the guilty soul pain
 Escape unscathed, I hate ye all—I As drives the gazer mad.
 curse,
 I loathe you !'
 Then I stooped and kissed my love,
 And left them in amaze ; and up the
 stair
 Swept slowly to my chamber, and
 therein,

Then as I passed,
I marked against the hardly dawning sky
A toilsome figure standing, bent and
strained,
Before a rocky mass, which with great
pain
And agony of labour it would thrust
Up a steep hill. But when upon the crest
It poised a moment, then I held my
breath
With dread, for, lo! the poor feet
seemed to clutch
The hillside as in fear, and the poor
hands
With hopeless fingers pressed into the
stone
In agony, and the limbs stiffened, and
a cry
Like some strong swimmer's, whom the
mightier stream
Sweeps downward, and he sees his
children's eyes
Upon the bank ; broke from him ; and
at last,
After long wrestlings with despair, the
limbs
Relaxed, and as I closed my fearful eyes,
Seeing the inevitable doom—a crash,
A horrible thunderous noise, as down
the steep
The shameless fragment leapt. From
crag to crag
It bounded ever swifter, flashing fire
And wreathed with smoke, as to the
lowest depths
Of the vale it tore, and seemed to take
with it
The miserable form whose painful gaze
I caught, as with the great rock whirled
and dashed

Downward, and marking every crag
with gore
And long gray hairs, it plunged, yet
living still,
To the black hollow ; and then a
silence came
More dreadful than the noise, and a
low groan
Was all that I could hear.
When to the foot
Of the dark steep I hurried, half in hope
To find the victim dead—not recogniz-
ing
The undying life of Hell—I seemed to
see
An aged man, bruised, bleeding, with
gray hairs,
And eyes from which the cunning leer
of greed
Was scarcely yet gone out.
A crafty voice
It was that answered me, the voice of
guile
Part purified by pain :
“ There comes not death
To those who live in Hell, nor hardly
pause
Of suffering longer than may serve to
make
The pain renewed, more piercing.
Long ago,
I thought that I had cheated Death,
and now
I seek him ; but he comes not, nor
know I
If ever he will hear me. Whence art
thou ?
Comest thou from earthly air, or
whence ? What power
Has brought thee hither ? For I know
indeed
Thou art not lost as I ; for never here
I look upon a human face, nor see

The ghosts who doubtless here on every side
 Suffer a common pain, only at times
 I hear the echo of a shriek far off,
 Like some faint ghost of woe which
 fills the pause
 And interval of suffering; but from whom
 The voice may come, or whence, I
 know not, only
 The air teems with vague pain, which
 doth distract
 The ear when for a moment comes
 surcease
 Of agony, and the sense of effort spent
 In vain and fruitless labour, and the pang
 Of long-deserted defeat, which waits
 and takes
 The world-worn heart, and maddens it
 when all—
 Heaven, conscience, happiness, ate
 staked and lost
 For gains which still elude it.
 Yet 'twas sweet,
 A King in early youth, when pleasure
 is sweet,
 To live the fair successful years, and
 know
 The envy and respect of men. I cared
 For none of youth's delights: the
 dance, the song,
 Allured me not; the smooth soft ways
 of sense
 Tempted me not at all. I could despise
 The follies that I shared not, spending all
 The long laborious days in toilsome
 schemes
 To compass honour and wealth, and,
 as I grew
 In name and fame, finding my hoarded
 gains
 Transmuted into Power. The seas
 were white

With laden argosies, and all were mine.
 The sheltering moles defied the wintry
 storms,
 And all were mine. The marble aqueducts,
 The costly bridges, all were mine.
 Fair roads
 Wound round and round the hills—my
 work. The gods
 Alone I heeded not, nor cared at all
 For aught but that my eyes and ears
 might take,
 Spurning invisible things, nor built I to
 them
 Temple or shrine, wrapt up in life, set
 round
 With earthly blessings like a god. I rose
 To such excess of weal and fame and
 pride,
 My people held me god-like. I grew
 drunk
 With too great power, scoffing at men
 and gods,
 Careless of both, but not averse to fling
 To those too weak themselves, what
 benefits
 My largest wisdom spurned.
 Then suddenly
 I knew the pain of failure. Summer
 storms
 Sucked down my fleets even within
 sight of port.
 A grievous blight wasted the harvest-fields,
 Mocking my hopes of gain. Wars
 came and drained
 My store, and I grew needy, knowing now
 The hell of stronger souls, the loss of
 power
 Wherein they exulted once. There
 comes no pain
 Deeper than to have known delight of
 power,

And then to lose it all. But I, I would
not
Sit tame beneath defeat, trimming my
sails
To wait the breeze of Fortune—fickle
breath
Which perhaps might breathe no more
—but chose instead
By rash conceit and bolder enterprise
To win her aid again. I had no thought
Of selfish gain, only to be and act
As a god to those, feeding my sum of
pride
With acted good.

But evermore defeat
Dogged me, and more and more my
people grew
To doubt me, seeing not the wealth,
the force,
Which once they worshipped. Then
the lust of power
Loved, not for sake of others, but itself,
Grew on me, and the pride which can
dare all,
Save failure only, seized me. Evil
finds
Its ready chance. There were rich
argosies
Upon the seas : I sank them, ship and
crew,
In the unbetraying ocean. Wayfarers
Crossing the passes with rich mer-
chandise
My creatures, hid behind the crags,
o'erwhelmed
With rocks hurled downward. Yet I
spent my gains
For the public weal, not otherwise ;
and they,
The careless people, took the piteous
spoils
Which cost the lives of many, and a
man's soul,

And blessed the giver. Empty venal
blessings,
Which sting more deep than curses !
For awhile
I was content with this, but at the last
A great contempt and hatred of them
took me,
The base, vile churls ! Why should
I stain my soul
For such as those—dogs that would
fawn and lick
The hand that fed them, but, if food
should fail,
Would turn and rend me ? I would
none of them ;
I would grow rich and happy, being
indeed
Godlike in brain to such. So with all
craft,
And guile, and violence I enriched me,
loading
My treasures with gold. My deep-laid
schemes
Of gain engrossed the long laborious
days,
Stretched far into the night. Enjoy,
I might not,
Seeing it was all to do, and life so brief
That ere a man might gain the goal he
would,
Lo ! Age, and with it Death, and so
an end !
For all the tales of the indignant gods,
What were they but the priests ? I
had myself
Broken all oaths ; long time deceived
and ruined
With every phase of fraud the pious
fools
Whom oath-sworn Justice bound ;
battened on blood ;
And what was I the worse ? How
should the gods

Bear rule if I were happy? Death alone
Was certain. Therefore must I haste
 to heap
Treasure sufficient for my need, and
 then
Enjoy the gathered good.

But gradually
There came—not great disasters which
 might crush
All hope, but petty checks which did
 decrease
My store, and left my labour vain, and
 me
Unwilling to enjoy; and gradually
I felt the chill approach of age, which
 stole
Higher and higher on me, till the life,
As in a paralytic, left my limbs
And heart, and mounted upwards to
 my brain,
Its last resort, and rested there awhile
Ere it should spread its wings. But
 even thus,
Tho' powerless to enjoy, the insatiate
 greed
And thirst of power sustained me, and
 supplied
Life's spark with some scant fuel, till
 it seemed,
Year after year, as if I could not die,
Holding so fast to life. I grew so old
That all the comrades of my youth,
 my prime,
My age, were gone, and I was left alone
With those who knew me not, bereft
 of all
Except my master passion—an old man
Forlorn, forgotten of the gods and
 Death.

Yet all the people, seeing me grow old
And prosperous, held me wise, and
 spread abroad

Strange fables, growing day by day
 more strange—
How I deceived the very gods. They
 thought
That I was blest, remembering not the
 wear
Of anxious thought, the growing sum
 of pain,
The failing ear and eye, the slower
 limbs,
Whose briefer name is Age: and yet I
 trow
I was not all unhappy, though I knew
It was too late to enjoy, and though
 my store
Increased not as my greed—nay, even
 sunk down
A little, year by year. Till, last of
 all,
When now my time was come and I
 had grown
A little tired of living, a trivial hurt
Laid me upon my bed; and as I mused
On my long life and all its villanies,
The wickedness I did, the blood I shed,
The guile, the frauds of years—they
 came with news,
One now, and now another; how my
 schemes
Were crushed, my enterprises lost, my
 toil
And labour all in vain. Day after day
They brought these tidings, while I
 longed to rise
And stay the tide of ill, and raved to
 know
I could not. At the last the added sum
Of evil, like yon great rock poised
 awhile
Uncertain, gathered into one, o'er-
 whelmed
My feeble strength, and left me ruined
 and lost,

And showed me all I was, and all the depth
 And folly of my sin, and racked my brain,
 And sank me in despair and misery,
 And broke my heart and slew me.

Therefore 'tis I spend the long, long centuries which have come
 Between me and my sin, in such dread tasks
 As that thou sawest. In the soul I sinned :
 In body and soul I suffer. What I bade My minjons do to others, that of woe I bear myself ; and in the pause of ill, As now, I know again the bitter pang Of failure, which of old pierced thro' my soul
 And left me to despair. The pain of mind Is fiercer far than any bodily ill, And both are mine—the pang of torture-pain Always recurring ; and, far worse, the pang Of consciousness of black sins sinned in vain—
 The doom of constant failure.

Will, fierce Will ! Thou parent of unrest and toil and woe, Measureless effort ! growing day by day To force strong souls along the giddy steep That slopes to the pit of Hell, where effort serves Only to speed destruction ! Yet I know Thou art not, as some hold, the primal curse Which doth condemn us ; since thou bearest in thee No power to satisfy thyself ; but rather,

The spring of act, whereby in earth and heaven Both men and gods do breathe and live and are, Since Life is Act and not to Do is Death— I do not blame thee : but to work in vain Is bitterest penalty : to find at last The soul all fouled with sin and stained with blood In vain ; ah, this is hell indeed—the hell Of lost and striving souls ! ” Then as I passed, The halting figure bent itself again To the old task, and up the rugged steep Thrust the great rock with groanings. Horror chained My parting footsteps, like a nightmare dream Which holds us that we flee not, with fixed eyes That loathe to see, yet cannot choose but gaze Till all be done. Slowly, with dreadful toil And struggle and strain, and bleeding hands and knees, And more than mortal strength, against the hill He pressed, the wretched one ! till with long pain He trembled on the summit, a gaunt form, With that great rock above him, poised and strained, Now gaining, now receding, now in act To win the summit, now borne down again, And then the inevitable crash—the

Leaping from crag to crag. But ere it
ceased
In dreadful silence, and the low groan
came,
My limbs were loosed with one con-
vulsive bound ;
I hid my face within my hands, and fled,
Surfeit with horror.

Then it was again
A woman whom I saw, pitiless, stern,
Bearing the brand of blood—a lithe
dark form,
And cruel eyes which burned beneath
the gems
That argued her a Queen, and on her
side
An ancient stain of gore, which did
befoul
Her royal robe. A murdereress in thought
And dreadful act, who took within the
toils
Her kingly Lord, and slew him of old
time
After burnt Troy. I had no time to
speak
When she shrieked thus :
“ It doth repent me not.
I would 'twere yet to do, and I would
do it
Again a thousand times, if the shed
blood
Might for one hour restore me to the
kisses
Of my Ægisthus. Oh, he was divine,
My hero, with the godlike locks and
eyes
Of Eros' self ! What boots it that they
prate
‘ Of wisely duty, love of spouse or child,

Honour or pity, when the swift fire takes
A woman's heart, and burns it out, and
leaps
With fierce forked tongue around it,
till it lies
In ashes, a dead heart, nor aught re-
mains
Of old affections, naught but the new
flame
Which is unquenched desire ?
It did not come,
My blessing, all at once, but the slow
fruit
Of solitude and midnight loneliness,
And weary waiting for the tardy news
Of taken Troy. Long years I sat alone,
Wilowed, within my palace, while my
Lord
Was over seas, waging the accursed war,
First of the file of Kings. Year after
year
Came false report, or harder, no report
Of the great fleet. The summers waxed
and waned,
The wintry surges smote the sounding
shores,
And yet there came no end of it. They
brought
Now hopeless failure, now great vic-
tories ;
And all alike were false, all but delay
And hope deferred, which coming not,
can break
The strong heart suffering wrings not.
So I bore
Long time the solitary years, and sought
To solace the dull days with motherly
cares
For those my Lord had left me. My
firstborn,
Iphigeneia, sailed at first with him
Upon that fatal voyage, but the young
Orestes and Electra stayed with me—

Not dear as she was, for the firstborn
 takes
The mother's heart, and, with the milk
 it draws
From the mother's virgin breast, drains
 all the love
It bore, ay, even tho' the sire be dear ;
Much more, then, when he is a King
 indeed,
Mighty in war and council, but too high
To stoop to a woman's love. But she
 was gone,
Nor heard I tidings of her, knowing not
If yet she walked the earth, nor if she
 bare
The load of children, even as I had
 borne
Her in my opening girlhood, when I
 leapt
From child to Queen, but never loved
 the King.

Thus the slow years rolled onward,
 till at last
There came a dreadful rumour—'She
 is dead,
Thy daughter, years ago. The cruel
 priests
Clamoured for blood; the stern cold
 Kings stood round
Without a tear, and he, her sire, with
 them,
To see a virgin bleed. They cut with
 knives
[The slender girlish throat; they watched
 the blood
Drip slowly on the sand, and the young
 life
Meek as a lamb come to the sacrifice
To appease the angry gods.' And he,
 the King,
Her father, stood by too, and saw them
 work

The wickedness, breathing no word of
 wrath,
Till all was done ! The cowards ! the
 dull cowards !
I would some black storm, bursting
 suddenly,
Had whelmed them and their fleets, ere
 yet they dared
To waste an innocent life !
 I had gone mad,
I know it, but for him, my love, my
 dear,
My fair sweet love. He came to com-
 fort me
With words of friendship, holding that
 my Lord
Was bound, perhaps, to let her die—
 'The gods
Were ofttimes hard to appease—or was
 it indeed
The priests who asked it? Were there
 any gods?
Or only phantoms, creatures of the brain,
Born of the fears of men, the greed of
 priests,
Useful to govern women? Had he
 been
Lord of the fleet, not all the sooth-
 sayers
Who ever frightened cowards should have
 sunk
His soul to such black depths.' I
 hearkening to him
As 'twere my own thought grown
 articulat.,
Found my grief turn to hate, and hate
 to love—
Hate of my Lord, love of the voice
 which spoke
Such dear and comfortable words. And
 thus,
Love to a storm of passion growing,
 swept

My wounded soul and dried my tears,
as dries
The hot sirocco all the bitter pools
Of salt among the sand. I never
knew
True love before ; I was a child, no
more,
When the King cast his eyes on me.
What is it
To have borne the weight of offspring
'neath the zone
If Love be not their sire ; or live long
years
Of commerce, not of love ? Better a
day
Of Passion than the long unlovely years
Of wisely duty, when Love cometh not
To wake the barren days !

And yet at first
I hesitated long, nor would embrace
The blessing that was mine. We are
hedged round,
We women, by such close-drawn ordi-
nances,
Set round us by our tyrants, that we
fear
To overstep a hand's breadth the dull
bounds
Of custom ; but at last Love, waking
in me,
Burst all my chains asunder, and I
lived
For naught but Love.

My son, the young Orestes,
I sent far off ; my girl Electra only
Migined, too young to doubt me, and
I knew
Of my what 'twas to live.
My hero So the swift years
eyes found me happy, till the
Of Eros' *
pri day when Rumour, thou-
Of wised-tongued,

Whispered of taken Troy ; and from
my dream
Of happiness, sudden I woke, and knew
The coming retribution. We had
grown
Too loving for concealment, and our
tale
Of mutual love was bruited far and
wide
Through Aigos. All the gossips bruited
it,
And were all tongue to tell it to the
King
When he should come. And should
the cold proud Lord
I never loved, the murderer of my girl,
Come 'twixt my love and me ? A
swift resolve
Flashed through me pondering on it :
Love for Love
And Blood for Blood—the simple
golden rule
Taught by the elder gods.
When I had taken
My fixed resolve, I grew impatient for
it,
Counting the laggard days. Oh, it was
sweet
To simulate the yearning of a wife
Long parted from her Lord, and mock
the fools
Who dogged each look and word, and
but for fear
Had torn me from my throne—the
pies, the jays,
The impotent chatterers, who thought
by words
To stay me in the act ! 'Twas sweet
to mock them
And read distrust within their eyes,
when I,
Knowing my purpose, bade them quick
prepare

All fitting honours for the King, and knew
 They dared not disobey—oh, 'twas enough
 To wing the slow-paced hours.
 But when at last
 I saw his sails upon the verge, and then
 The sea worn ship, and marked his face grown old,
 The body a little bent, which was so straight,
 The thin gray hairs which were the raven locks
 Of manhood when he went, I felt a moment
 I could not do the deed. But when I saw
 The beautiful sad woman come with him,
 The future in her eyes, and her pale lips
 Silent, but charged with doom, two thoughts at once
 Assailed me, bidding me despatch with a blow
 Him and his mistress, making sure the will
 Of fate, and my revenge.
 Oh, it was strange
 To see all happen as we planned ; as 'twere
 Some drama oft rehearsed, wherein each step,
 Each word, is so prepared, the poorest player
 Knows his turn come to do—the solemn landing—
 The ride to the palace gate—the courtesies
 Of welcome—the mute crowds without
 —the bath
 Prepared within—the precious circling folds
 Of tissue stretched around him, shutting out
 The gaze, and folding helpless like a net
 The mighty limbs—the battle-axe laid down
 Against the wall, and I, his wife and Queen,
 Alone with him, waiting and watching still,
 Till the woman shrieked without.
 Then with swift step
 I seized the axe, and struck him as he lay
 Helpless, once, twice, and thrice—once for my girl,
 Once for my love, once for the woman, and all
 For Fate and my Revenge !
 He gave a groan,
 Once only, as I thought he might ; and then
 No sound but the quick gurgling of the blood,
 As it flowed from him in streams, and turned the pure
 And limpid water of the bath to red—I had not looked for that—it flowed and flowed,
 And seemed to madden me to look on it,
 Until my love with hands bloody as mine,
 But with the woman's blood, rushed in, and eyes
 Rounded with horror ; and we turned to go,
 And left the dead alone.
 But happiness
 Still mocked me, and a doubt unknown before
 Came on me, and amid the silken shows

And luxury of power I seemed to see
 Another answer to my riddle of life Than that I gave myself, and it was 'murder ;'
 And in my people's sullen mien and eyes,
 'Murder ;' and in the mirror, when I looked,
 'Murder' glared out, and terror lest my son
 Returning, grown to manhood, should avenge His father's blood. For somehow, as 'twould seem,
 The gods, if gods there be, or the stern Fate
 Which doth direct our little lives, do flich
 Our happiness—though bright with Love's own ray,
 There comes a cloud which veils it. Yet, indeed,
 My days were happy. I repent me not ;
 I would wade through seas of blood to know again
 Those keen delights once more.

But my young girl

Electra, grown to woman, turned from me
 Her modest maiden eyes, nor loved to set
 Her kiss upon my cheek, but, all distraught
 With secret care, hid her from all the pomps
 And revelries which did besit her youth, Walking alone ; and often at the tomb
 Of her lost sire they found her, pouring out
 Libations to the dead. And evermore I did bethink me of my son Orestes,

Who now should be a man ; and yearned sometimes To see his face, yet feared lest from his eyes His father's soul should smite me.

So I lived

Happy and yet unquiet—a stern voice Speaking of doom, which long time softer notes
 Of careless weal, the music that doth spring
 From the fair harmonies of life and love,
 Would drown in their own concord. This at times,
 Nay, day by day, stronger and dreadfuller,
 With dominant accent, marred the sounds of joy
 By one prevailing discord. So at length I came to lose the Present in the dread
 Of what might come ; the penalty that waits
 Upon successful sin ; who, having sinned,
 Had missed my sin's reward.

Until one day

I, looking from my palace casement, saw A humble suppliant, clad in pilgrim garb,
 Approach the marble stair. A sudden throb Thrilled thro' me, and the mother's heart went forth
 Thro' all disguise of garb and rank and years,
 Knowing my son. How fair he was, how tall
 And vigorous, my boy ! What strong straight limbs

And noble port ! How beautiful the shade
Of manhood on his lip ! I longed to burst
From my chamber down, yearning to throw myself
Upon his neck within the palace court,
Before the guards — spurning my queenly rank,
All but my motherhood. And then a chill
Of doubt o'erspread me, knowing what a gulf
Fate set between our lives, impassable
As that great gulf which yawns 'twixt life and death
And 'twixt this Hell and Heaven. I shrank back,
And turned to think a moment, half in fear,
And half in pain ; dividing the swift mind,
Yet all in love.

Then came a cry, a groan, From the inner court, the clash of swords, the fall
Of a corpse upon the pavement ; and one cried, 'The King is dead, slain by the young Orestes,
Who cometh hither.' With the word, the door flew open, and my son stood straight before me, His drawn sword dripping blood. Oh, he was fair
And terrible to see, when from his limbs, The suppliant's mantle fallen, left the mail.
And arms of a young warrior. Love and Hate,

Which are the offspring of a common sire,
Strove for the mastery, till within his eyes
I saw his father's ghost glare unpeased From out Love's casements.

Then I knew my fate
And his—mine to be slain by my son's hand,
And his to slay me, since the Furies drove
Our lives to one destruction ; and I took
His point within my breast.

But I praise not The selfish, careless gods who wrecked our lives,
Making the King the murderer of his girl,
And me his murderess ; making my son
The murderer of his mother and her love—
A mystery of blood !—I curse them all,
The careless Forces, sitting far withdrawn
Upon the heights of Space, taking men's lives
For playthings, and deriding as in sport
Our happiness and woe— I curse them all.
We have a right to joy ; we have a right,
I say, as they have. Let them stand confessed
The puppets that they are—too weak to give
The good they feign to love, since Fate, too strong
For them as us, beyond their painted sky,

Sits and derides them, all I curse
 Fate too,
 The deaf blind Fury, taking human
 souls
 And crushing them, as a dull fretful
 child
 Crushes its toys and knows not with
 what skill
 Those feeble forms are feigned.
 I curse, I loathe,
 I spit on them. It doth repent me
 not.
 I would 'twere yet to do. I have lived
 my life.
 I have loved. See, there he lies within
 the bath,
 And thus I smite him! thus! Didst
 hear him groan?
 Oh, vengeance, thou art sweet! What,
 living still?
 Ah me! we cannot die! Come, torture
 me,
 Ye Furies—for I love not soothing
 words—
 As once ye did my son. Ye miserable
 Blind ministers of Hell, I do defy
 you;
 Not all your torments can undo the
 Past
 Of Passion and of Love!"

Even as she spake
 There came a viewless trouble in the
 air,
 Which took her, and a sweep of wings
 unseen,
 And terrible sounds, which swooped
 on her and hushed
 Her voice, and seemed to occupy her
 soul
 With horror and despair; and as she
 passed
 I marked her agonized eyes.

But as I went,
 Full many a dreadful shape of lonely
 pain
 I saw. What need to tell them? We
 are filled
 Who live to-day with a more present
 sense
 Of the great love of God, than those of
 old
 Who, groping in the dawn of Knowl-
 edge, saw
 Only dark shadows of the Unknown;
 or he,
 First born of later singers, who swept
 deep
 His awful lyre, and woke the voice of
 song,
 Dumb thro' the age-long night. We
 dread to-day
 To dwell on those long agonies its sin
 Brings on the offending soul; who
 hold a creed
 Of deeper pity, knowing what chains
 of ill
 Confine our petty lives. Each phase
 of woe,
 Suffering, and torture which the gloomy
 thought
 Of bigots feigns for others—all were
 there.
 One there was stretched upon a rolling
 wheel,
 Which was the barren round of sense,
 that still
 Returned upon itself and broke the
 limbs
 Bound to it day and night. Others I
 saw
 Doomed, with unceasing toil, to fill the
 urns

Whose precious waters sank ere they could slake
 Their burning thirst. Another shapeless soul,
 Full of revolts and hates and tyrannous force,
 The weight of earth, which was its earth-born taint,
 Pressed groaning down, while with fierce beak and claw,
 The vulture of remorse, piercing his breast,
 Preyed on his heart. For others, overhead,
 Great crags of rock impending seemed to fall,
 But self not nor brought peace. I felt my soul
 Blunted with horrors, yearning to escape To where, upon the limits of the wood, Some scanty twilight grew.
 But ere I passed From those grim shades a deep voice sounded near, A voice without a form.

“ There is an end Of all things that thou seest ! There is an end Of Wrong and Death and Hell, when the long wear

Of Time and Suffering has effaced the stain
 Ingrown upon the soul, and the cleansed spirit,
 Long ages floating on the wandering winds
 Or rolling deeps of Space, renews itself And doth regain its dwelling, and, once more
 Blent with the general order, floats anew Upon the stream of Things,* and comes at length,
 After new deaths, to that dim waiting-place
 Thou next shalt see, and with the justified
 White souls awaits the End; or, snatched at once,
 If Fate so will, to the pure sphere itself,
 Lives and is blest, and works the Eternal Work
 Whose name and end is Love ! There is an end
 Of Wrong and Death and Hell !”
 Even as I heard, I passed from out the shadow of Death and Pain, Crying, “ There is an end !”

BOOK II.

HADES.

THEN from those dark And dreadful precincts passing, ghostly fields And voiceless took me. A faint twilight veiled The leafless, shadowy trees and herbless plains.

There stirred no breath of air to wake to life The slumbers of the world. The sky above Was one gray, changeless cloud; there looked no eye Of Life from the veiled heavens; but Sleep and Death

* Virgil, “Æneid ” vi. 740.

Compassed me everywhere. And yet
no fear

Nor horror took me here, where was
no pain

Nor dread, save that strange tremor
which assails

One who in life's hot noon tide looks on
death

And knows he too shall die. The
ghosts which rose

From every darkling copse showed
thin and pale —

Thinner and paler far than those I left
In agony; even as, Pity seems to wear
A thinner form than Fear.

Not caged alone
Like those the avenging Furies, purged
were these,

Not that dim land as those black
cavernous depths

Where no hope comes. Fair souls
were they and white

Whom there I saw, waiting as we shall
wait,

The Beatific End, but thin and pale
As the young sun which made them,
touched a little

By the sad memories of the earth,
made glad

A little by past joys: no more; and
wrapt

In musing on the brief play played by
them

Upon the lively earth, yet ignorant
Of the long lapse of years, and what
had been

Since they too breathed Life's air, or if
they knew

Keeping some echo only; but their
pain

Was fainter than their joy, and a great
hope

Like ours possessed them dimly.

First I saw
A youth who pensive leaned against
the trunk
Of a dark cypress, and an idle flute
Hung at his side. A sorrowful sad
soul,
Such as sometimes he knows, who
meets the gaze,
Mute, uncomplaining yet most pitiful,
Of one whom Nature, by some secret
spite,
Has maimed and left imperfect; or the
pain
Which fills a poet's eyes. Beneath his
robe
I seemed to see the scar of cruel stripes,
Too hastily concealed. Yet was he
not
Wholly unhappy, but from out the
core
Of suffering flowed a secret spring of
joy,
Which mocked the droughs of Fate,
and left him glad
And glorying in his sorrow. As I
gazed
He raised his silent flute, and, half
ashamed,
Blew a soft note; and as I stayed
awhile
I heard him thus discourse—
“ The flute is sweet
To gods and men, but sweeter far the
lyre
And voice of a true singer. Shall I
seal
To tell of that great trial, when I
strode
And Phœbus conquered? Nay, no
shame it is

To bow to an immortal melody ;
But glory.

Once among the Phrygian hills
I lay a-musing,—while the silly sheep
Wandered among the thyme—upon the
bank
Of a clear mountain stream; beneath
the pines,
Safe hidden from the noon. A dreamy
haze
Played on the uplands, but the hills
were clear
In sunlight, and no cloud was on the
sky.
It was the time when a deep silence
comes
Upon the summer earth, and all the
birds
Have ceased from singing, and the
world is still
At midnight, and if any live thing
move—
Some fur-clad creature, or cool gliding
snake—
Within the pipy overgrowth of weeds,
The ear can catch the rustle, and the
trees
And earth and air are listening. As I
lay,
Faintly, as in a dream, I seemed to
hear
A tender music, like the Aeolian
chords,
Sound low within the woodland, whence
the stream,
Flowed full, yet silent. Long, with
ear to ground,
I hearkened; and the sweet strain,
fuller grown,
Rounder and clearer came, and danced
along
In mirthful measure now, and now
grown grave

In dying falls, and sweeter and more
clear,
Tripping at nuptials and high revelry,
Wailing at burials, rapt in soaring
thoughts,
Chanting strange sea-tales full of
mystery,
Touching all chords of being, life and
death,
Now rose, now sank, and always was
divine,
So strange the music came.

Till, as I lay
Enamoured, shrill a sudden discord
rang,
Then all the sounds were still. A light-
ning-flash,
As from a sun-kissed gem, revealed the
wood.
A noise of water smitten, and on the
heights
A fair white fleece of cloud, which
swiftly climbed
Into the furthest heaven. Then, as I
mused,
Knowing a parting goddess, straight I
saw
A wayward splendour float upon the
stream,
And knew it for this jewelled flute,
which paused
Before me on an eddy. It I snatched
Eager, and to my ardent lips I bore
The wonder, and behold, with the first
breath—
The first warm human breath, the silent
strains,
The half-drowned notes which late the
goddess blew,
Revived, and sounded clearer, sweeter
far
Than mortal skill could make. So with
delight

Ah me ! how fair they were ! how
fair and dread
In face and form, they showed, when
now they stayed
Upon the thymy slope, and the young
god
Lay with his choir around him, beautiful
And bold as Youth and Dawn ! There
was no cloud
Upon the sky, nor any sound at all
When I began my strain. No coward
fear
Of what might come restrained me ;
but an awe
Of those immortal eyes and ears divine
Looking and listening. All the earth
seemed full
Of ear, for me alone—the woods, the
fields,
The hills, the skies were listening.
Scarce a sound
My flute might make ; such subtle
harmonies
The silence seemed to weave round me
and flout
The half unuttered thought. Till last
I blew,
As now, a hesitating note, and lo !
The breath divine, lingering on mortal
lips,
Hurried my soul along to such fair
rhymes,
Sweeter than wont, that swift I knew
my life
Rise up within me, and expand, and
all
The human, which so nearly is divine,
Was glorified, and on the Muses'
lips,
And in their lovely eyes, I saw a
fair
Approval, and my soul in me was
glad.

For all the strains I blew were strains
of love—
Love striving, love triumphant, love
that lies
Within beloved arms, and wreathes his
locks
With flowers, and lets the world go by
and sings
Unfeeling; and I saw a kindly gleam
Within the Muses' eyes, who were
indeed,
Women, though god-like.

But upon the face
Of the young Sun-god only haughty
scorn
Sate, and he swiftly struck his golden
lyre,
And played the Song of Life; and lo,
I knew
My strain, how earthy! Oh, to hear
the young
Apollo playing! and the hidden cells
And chambers of the universe displayed
Before the charmèd sound! I seemed
to float
In some enchanted cave, where the
wave dips
In from the sunlit sea, and floods its
depths
With reflex hues of heaven. My soul
was rapt
By that I heard, and dared to wish no
more
For victory; and yet because the sound
Of music that is born of human breath
Comes straighter from the soul than any
strain
The hand alone can make; therefore I
knew,
With a mixed thrill of pity and delight,
The nine immortal Sisters hardly
touched
By that fine strain of music, as by mine,

And when the high lay trembled to its
close,
Still doubting.
Then upon the Sun-god's face
There passed a cold proud smile. He
swept his lyre
Once more, then laid it down, and with
clear voice,
The voice of godhead, sang. Oh,
ecstasy,
Oh happiness of him who once has
heard
Apollo singing! For his ears the sound
Of grosser music dies, and all the earth
Is full of subtle undertones, which
change
The listener and transform him. As
he sang—
Of what I know not, but the music
touched
Each chord of being—I felt my secret
life
Stand open to it, as the parched earth
yawns
To drink the summer rain; and at the
call
Of those refreshing waters, all my
thought
Stir from its dark and sunless depths,
and burst
Into sweet, odorous flowers, and from
their wells
Deep call to deep, and all the mystery
Of all that is, laid open. As he sang,
I saw the Nine, with lovely pitying
eyes,
Sign 'He has conquered.' Yet I felt
no pang
Of fear, only deep joy that I had heard
Such music while I lived, even though
it brought
Torture and death. For what were it
to lie

Sleek, crowned with roses, drinking
vulgar praise,
And surfeited with offerings, the dull
gift
Of ignorant hands—all which I might
have known—
To this diviner failure? Godlike 'tis
To climb upon the icy ledge, and fall
Where other footsteps dare not. So I
knew
My fate, and it was near.

For to a pine
They bound me willing, and with cruel
stripes
Tore me, and took my life.
But from my blood
Was born the stream of song, and on
its flow
My poor flute, to the clear swift river
borne,
Floated, and thence adown a lordlier
tide
Into the deep, wide sea. I do not
blame
Phœbus, or Nature which has set this
bar
Betwixt success and failure, for I know
How far high failure overleaps the
bound
Of low successes. Only suffering draws
The inner heart of song and can elicit
The perfumes of the soul. 'Twere not
enough
To fall, for that were happiness to
him
Who ever upward looks with reverent
eye
And seeks but to admire. So, since
the race
Of bards soars highest; as who seek to
show
Our lives as in a glass; therefore it
comes

That suffering weds with song, from
him of old,
Who solaced his blank darkness with
his lyre;
Through all the story of neglect and
scorn,
Necessity, sheer hunger, early death,
Which smite the singer still. Not only
those
Who keep clear accents of the voice
divine
Are honourable—they are happy, in-
deed,
Whate'er the world has hold—but those
who hear
Some fair faint echoes, though the
crowd be deaf,
And see the white gods' garments on
the hills,
Which the crowd sees not, though they
may not find
Fit music for their thought; they too
are blest,
Not pitiable. Not from arrogant
pride
Nor over-boldness fail they who have
striven
To tell what they have heard, with
voice too weak
For such high message. More it is
than ease,
Palace and pomp, honours and luxuries,
To have seen white Presences upon the
hills,
To have heard the voices of the Eternal
Gods."

So spake he, and I seemed to look on
him,
Whose sad young eyes grow on us from
the page
Of his own verse: who did himself to
death :

Or whom the dullard slew: or whom
the sea
Rapt from us: and I passed without a
word,
Slow, grave, with many musings.

Then I came
On one a maiden, meek with folded
hands,
Seated against a rugged face of cliff,
In silent thought. Anon she raised her
arms,
Her gleaming arms, above her on the
rock,
With hands which clasped each other,
till she showed
As in a statue, and her white robe fell
Down from her maiden shoulders, and
I knew
The fair form as it seemed chained to
the stone
By some invisible gyves, and named
her name:
And then she raised her frightened eyes
to mine
As one who, long expecting some great
fear,
Scarce sees deliverance come. But
when she saw
Only a kindly glance, a softer look
Came in them, and she answered to my
thought
With a sweet voice and low.
“I did but muse
Upon the painful past, long dead and
done,
Forgetting I was saved.

The angry clouds
Burst always on the low flat plains, and
swept

The harvest to the ocean; all the land
Was wasted. A great serpent from the
deep,
Lifting his horrible head above their
homes,
Devoured the children. And the people
prayed
In vain to careless gods.

On that dear land,
Which now was turned into a sullen
sea,
Gazing in safety from the stately towers
Of my sire's palace, I, a princess, saw,
Lapt in soft luxury, within my bower
The wreck of humble homes come
whirling by,
The drowning, bleating flocks, the
bellowing herds,
The grain scarce husbanded by toiling
hands
Upon the sunlit plain, rush to the sea,
With floating corpses. On the rain-
swept hills
The remnant of the people huddled
close,
Homeless and starving. All my being
was filled
With pity for them, and I joyed to
give
What food and shelter and compas-
sionate hands
Of woman might. I took the little
ones
And clasped them shivering to the
virgin breast
Which knew no other touch but theirs,
and gave
Raiment and food. My sire, not stern
to me,
Smiled on me as he saw. My gentle
mother,
Who loved me with a closer love than
binds

A mother to her son ; and sunned herself
 In my fresh beauty, seeing in my young gaze
 Her own fair vanished youth ; doted on me,
 And faint had kept my eyes from the sad sights
 That pained them. But my heart was faint in me,
 Seeing the ineffable miseries of life,
 And that mysterious anger of the gods,
 And helpless to allay them. All in vain
 Were prayer and supplication, all in
 The costly victims steamed. The vengeful clouds
 Hid the fierce sky, and still the ruin came.
 And wallowing his grim length within the flood,
 Over the ravaged fields and homeless homes,
 The fell sea-monster raged, sating his jaws
 With blood and rapine.
 Then to the dread shrine
 Of Ammon went the priests, and reverend chiefs
 Of all the nation. White-robed, at their head,
 Went slow my royal sire. The oracle
 Spoke clear, not as oftentimes in words obscure,
 Ambiguous. And as we stood to meet
 The suppliants—she who bare me, with her head
 Upon my neck—we cheerful and with song
 Welcomed their swift return ; auguring well
 From such a quick-sped mission.

But my sire hid his face from me, and the crowd of priests
 And nobles looked not at us. And no word
 Was spoken till at last one drew a scroll
 And gave it to the queen, who straightway swooned,
 Having read it, on my breast, and then I saw,
 I the young girl whose soft life scarcely knew
 Shadow of sorrow, I whose heart was full
 Of pity for the rest, what doom was mine.
 I think I hardly knew in that dread hour
 The fear that came anon ; I was transformed
 Into a champion of my race, made strong
 With a new courage, glorying to meet, In all the ecstasy of sacrifice,
 Death face to face. Some god, I know not who,
 O'erspread me, and despite my mother's tears
 And my stern father's grief, I met my fate
 Unshrinking. When the moon rose clear from cloud
 Once more again over the midnight sea,
 And that vast watery plain, where were before
 Hundreds of happy homes, and well-tilled fields,
 And purple vineyards ; from my father's towers
 The white procession went along the paths,

The high cliff paths, which well I loved
of old,
Among the myrtles. Priests with cen-
sers went
And offerings, robed in white, and
round their brows
The sacred fillet. With his nobles
walked
My sire with breaking heart. My
mother clung
To me the victim, and the young girls
went
With wailing and with tears. A solemn
strain
The soft flutes sounded, as we went by
night
To a wild headland, rock-based in the sea.

There on a sea-worn rock, upon the
verge,
To some rude stanchions, high above
my head,
They bound me. Out at sea, a black
reef rose,
Washed by the constant surge, wherein
a cave
Sheltered deep down the monster. The
sad queen
Would scarcely leave me, though the
priests shrunk back
In terror. Last, torn from my endless
kiss,
Swooning they bore her upwards. All
my robe
Fell from my lifted arms, and left dis-
played
The virgin treasure of my breasts; and
then
The white procession through the moon-
light streamed
Upwards, and soon their soft flutes
sounded low
Upon the high lawns, leaving me alone.

There stood I in the moonlight, left
alone
Against the sea-worn rock. Hardly I
knew,
Seeing only the bright moon and
summer sea,
Which gently heaved and surged, and
kissed the ledge
With smooth warm tides, what fate was
mine. I seemed,
Soothed by the quiet, to be resting still
Within my maiden chamber, and to
watch
The moonlight thro' my lattice. Then
again
Fear came, and then the pride of sacri-
fice
Filled me, as on the high cliff lawns I
heard
The wailing cries, the chanted liturgies,
And knew me bound forsaken to the
rock,
And saw the monster-haunted depths of
sea.

So all night long upon the sandy
shores
I heard the hollow murmur of the wave,
And all night long the hidden sea caves
made
A ghostly echo; and the sea birds
mewed
Around me; once I heard a mocking
laugh,
As of some scornful Nereid; once the
waters
Broke louder on the scarped reefs, and
ebbed
As if the monster coming; but again
He came not, and the dead moon sank,
and still
Only upon the cliffs the wails, the
chants,

And I forsaken on my sea-worn rock,
And lo, the monster-haunted depths of
sea.

Till at the dead dark hour before the
dawn,
When sick men die, and scarcely fear
itself

Bore up my weary eyelids, a great surge
Burst on the rock, and slowly, as it
seemed,

The sea sucked downward to its depths,
laid bare

The hidden reefs, and then before my
eyes--

Oh, terrible ! a huge and loathsome
snake

Lifted his dreadful crest and scaly side
Above the wave, in bulk and length so
large,

Coil after hideous coil, that scarce the
eye

Could measure its full horror ; the great
jaws

Dropped as with gore ; the large and
furious eyes

Were fired with blood and lust. Nearer
he came,

And slowly, with a devilish glare, more
near,

Till his hot sutor choked me, and his
tongue,

Forked horribly from out his poisonous
jaws,

Played lightning-like around me. For
awhile

I swooned, and when I knew my life
again,

Death's bitterness was past.

Then with a bound
Leaped up the broad red sun above the
sea,
And lit the horrid fulgour of his scales,

And struck upon the rock ; and as I
turned

My head in the last agony of death,
I knew a brilliant sunbeam swiftly
leaping

Downward from crag to crag, and felt
new hope
Where all was hopeless. On the hills
a shout

Of joy, and on the rocks the ring of
mail ;
And while the hungry serpent's gloating
eyes

Were fixed on me, a knight in casque
of gold
And blazing shield, who with his flash-
ing blade

Fell on the monster. Long the conflict
raged,
Till all the rocks were red with blood
and slime,

And yet my champion from those
horrible jaws
And dreadful coils was seatheless. Zeus
his sire

Protected, and the awful shield he
bore
Withered the monster's life and left him
cold ;

Dragging his helpless length and
grovelling crest :
And o'er his glaring eyes the films of
death

Crept, and his writhing flank and hiss
of hate
The great deep swallowed down, and
blood and spume

Rose on the waves ; and a strange
wailing cry
Resounded o'er the waters, and the
sea

Bellowed within its hollow-sounding
eaves.

Then knew I, I was saved, and with
me all
The people. From my wrists he loosed
the gyves,
My hero; and within his godlike arms
Bore me by slippery rock and difficult
path,
To where my mother prayed. There
was no need
To ask my love. Without a spoken
word
Love lit his fires within me. My young
heart
Went forth, Love calling, and I gave
him all.

Dost thou then wonder that the
memory
Of this supreme brief moment lingers
still,
While all the happy uneventful years
Of wedded life, and all the fair young
growth
Of offspring, and the tranquil later joys,
Nay, even the fierce eventful fight which
raged
When we were wedded, fade and are
deceased,
Lost in the irrecoverable past?
Nay, 'tis not strange. Always the
memory
Of overwhelming perils or great joys,
Avoided or enjoyed, writes its own
trace
With such deep characters upon our
lives,
That all the rest are blotted. In this
place,
Where is not action, thought, or count
of time,
It is not weary as it were on earth,
To dwell on these old memories. Time
is born

Of dawns and sunsets, days that wax
and wane
And stamp themselves upon the yielding
face
Of fleeting human life; but here there is
Morning nor evening, act nor suffering,
But only one unchanging Present holds
Our being suspended. One blest day
indeed,
Or centuries ago or yesterday,
There came among us one who was
Divine,
Not as our gods, joyous and breathing
strength
And careless life, but crowned with a
new crown
Of suffering, and a great light came
with him,
And with him he brought Time and a
new sense
Of dim, long-vanished years; and since
he passed
I seem to see new meaning in my fate,
And all the deeds I tell of. Evermore
The young life comes, bound to the
cruel rocks
Alone. Before it the unfathomed sea
Smiles, filled with monstrous growths
that wait to take
Its innocence. Far off the voice and
hand
Of love kneel by in agony, and entreat
The seeming careless gods. Still when
the deep
Is smoothest, lo, the deadly fangs and
coils
Lurk near, to smite with death. And
down the crags
Of Duty, like a sudden sunbeam, springs
Some golden soul half mortal, half
divine,
Heaven-sent, and breaks the chain; and
evermore.

For sacrifice they die, through sacrifice
They live, and are for others, and no
grief

Which smites the humblest but reverberates
Thro' all the close-set files of life, and takes

The princely soul that from its royal towers

Looks down and sees the sorrow.

Sir, farewell!

If thou shouldst meet my children on the earth

Or here, for maybe it is long ago
Since I and they were living, say to them

I only muse a little here, and wait
The waking."

And her lifted arms sank down
Upon her knees, and as I passed I saw her
Gazing with soft rapt eyes, and on her lips
A smile as of a saint.

And then I saw
A manly hunter pace along the lea,
His bow upon his shoulder, and his spear

Poised idly in his hand : the face and form
Of vigorous youth ; but in the full brown eyes

A timorous gaze as of a hunted hart;
Brute-like, yet human still, even as the Faun

Of old, the dumb brute passing into man,
And dowered with double nature. As he came

I seemed to question of his fate, and he Answered me thus :

" 'Twas one hot afternoon

That I, a hunter, wearied with my day,
Heard my hounds baying fainter on the hills,

Led by the flying hart ; and when the sound

Faded and all was still, I turned to seek, O'ercome by heat and thirst, a little glade,

Beloved of old, where, in the shadowy wood,

The clear cold crystal of a mossy pool
Lipped the soft emerald marge, and gave again

The flower-starred lawn where oftentimes overspent

I lay upon the grass and careless bathed My limbs in the sweet lymph.

But as I neared

The hollow, sudden through the leaves I saw

A throng of wood-nymphs fair, sporting undraped

Round one, a goddess. She with timid hand

Loosened her zone, and glancing round let fall

Her robe from neck and bosom, pure and bright,

(For it was Dian's self I saw, none else)

As when she frees her from a fleece of cloud

And swims along the deep blue sea of heaven

On sweet June nights. Silent awhile I stood,

Rooted with awe, and fain had turned to fly,

But feared by careless footstep to affright

Those chaste cold eyes. Great awe
and reverence
Held me, and fear ; then Love with
passing wing
Fanned me, and held my eyes, and
checked my breath,
Signing ' Beware ! '

So for a time I watched,
Breathless as one a brooding nightmare
holds,
Who fleeth some great fear, yet fleeth
not ;
Till the last flutter of lawn, and veil no
more
Obscured, and all the beauty of my
dreams
Assailed my sense. But ere I raised
my eyes,
As one who fain would look and see
the sun,
The first glance dazed my brain. Only
I knew
The perfect outline flow in tender
curves,
To break in doubled charms ; only a
haze
Of creamy white, and dimpled depths
divine :
And then no more. For lo ! a sudden
chill,
And such thick mist as shuts the hills
at eve,
Oppressed me gazing ; and a heaven-
sent shame,
An awe, a fear, a reverence for the
unknown,
Froze all the springs of will and left
me cold,
And blinded all the longings of my eyes,
Leaving such dim reflection still as
mocks
Him who has looked on a great light,
and keeps

On his closed eyes the image. Pre-
sently,
My fainting soul, safe hidden for awhile
Deep in Life's mystic shades, renewed
herself,
And straight, the innocent brute within
the man
Bore on me, and with half-averted eye
I gazed upon the secret.
As I looked,
A radiance, white as beamed the frosty
moon
On the mad boy and slew him, beamed
on me ;
Made chill my pulses, checked my life
and heat ;
Transformed me, withered all my soul,
and left
My being burnt out. For lo ! the
dreadful eyes
Of Godhead met my gaze, and through
the mask
And thick disguise of sense, as through
a wood,
Pierced to my life. Then suddenly I
knew
An altered nature, touched by no desire
For that which showed so lovely, but
declined
To lower levels. Nought of fear or awe,
Nothing of love was mine. Wide-eyed
I gazed,
But saw no spiritual beam to blight
My brain with too much beauty, no
undraped
And awful majesty ; only a brute,
Dumb charm, like that which draws
the brute to it,
Unknowing it is drawn. So gradually
I knew a dull content o'ercloud my
sense,
And unabashed I gazed, like that dumb
bird

Which thinks no thought and speaks
no word, yet fronts
The sun that blinded Homer—all my
fear
Sunk with my shame, in a base happi-
ness.

But as I gazed, and careless turned
and passed
Through the thick wood, forgetting
what had been,
And thinking thoughts no longer, swift
there came
A mortal terror : voices that I knew,
My own hounds' bayings that I loved
before,
As with them often o'er the purple hills
I chased the flying hart from slope to
slope,
Before the slow sun climbed the
Eastern peaks,
Until the swift sun smote the Western
plain ;
Whom often I had cheered by voice
and glance,
Whom often I had checked with hand
and thong,
Grim followers, like the passions, firing
me ;
True servants, like the strong nerves,
urging me
On many a fruitless chase, to find and
take
Some too swift-fleeting beauty ; faithful
feet
And tongues, obedient always : these
I knew,
Clothed with a new-born force and
fiercer grown,
And stronger than their master ; and
I thought,
What if they tare me with their jaws,
nor cared

That once I ruled them,—brute pur-
suing brute,
And I the quarry ? Then I turned and
fled,—
If it was I indeed that feared and fled—
Down the long glades, and through the
tangled brakes,
Where scarce the sunlight pierced ;
fled on and on,
And panted, self-pursued. But ever-
more
The dissonant music which I knew so
sweet,
When by the windy hills, the echoing
vales,
And whispering pines it rang, now far,
now near,
As from my rushing steed I leant and
cheered
With voice and horn the chase—this
brought to me
Fear of I knew not what, which bade
me fly,
Fly always, fly ; but when my heart
stood still,
And all my limbs were stiffened as I fled,
Just as the white moon ghost-like
climbed the sky,
Nearer they came and nearer, baying
loud,
With bloodshot eyes and red jaws
dripping foam ;
And when I strove to check their
savagery,
Speaking with words ; no voice articu-
late came,
Only a dumb, low bleat. Then all the
throng
Leapt swift on me, and tare me as I lay,
And left me man again.

Wherefore I walk
Along these dim fields peopled with
the ghosts

Of heroes who have left the ways of earth
 For this faint ghost of them. Sometimes I think,
 Pondering on what has been, that all my days
 Were shadows, all my life an allegory ; And, though I know sometimes some fainter gleam
 Of the old beauty move me, and sometimes Some beat of the old pulses ; that my fate,
 For ever hurrying on in hot pursuit, To fall at length self-slain, was but a tale
 Writ large by Zeus upon a mortal life, Writ large, and yet a riddle. For sometimes I read its meaning thus : Life is a chase, And Man the hunter, always following on, With bounds of rushing thought or fiery sense, Some hidden truth or beauty, fleeting still
 For ever through the thick-leaved coverts deep And wind-worn wolds of time. And if he turn A moment from the hot pursuit to seize Some chance-brought sweetness, other than the search To which his soul is set,—some dalliance, Some outward shape of Art, some lower love, Some charm of wealth and sleek content and home,— Then, if he check an instant, the swift chase Of fierce untempered energies which pursue,

With jaws unsated and a thirst for act, Bears down on him with clang ing shock, and whelms His prize and him in ruin.
 And sometimes I seem to myself a thinker, who at last, Amid the chase and capture of low ends, Pausing by some cold well of hidden thought Comes on some perfect truth, and looks and looks Till the fair vision blinds him. And the sun Of all his lower self pursuing him, The strong brute forces, the unchecked desires, Finding him bound and speechless, deem him now No more their master, but some soul-less thing : And leap on him, and seize him, and possess His life, till through death's gate he pass to life, And, his own ghost, revives. But looks no more Upon the truth unveiled, save through a cloud Of creed and faith and longing, which shall change One day to perfect knowledge.
 But who'er Shall read the riddle of my life, I walk In this dim land amid dim ghosts of kings, As one day thou shalt ; meantime, fare thou well."

Then passed he ; and I marked him slowly go Along the winding ways of that weird land, And vanish in a wood.

And next I knew
A woman perfect as a young man's
dream,
And breathing as it seemed the nimble
air
Of the fair days of old, when man was
young
And life an Epic. Round the lips a
smile
Subtle and deep and sweet as hers who
looks
From the old painter's canvas, and
derides
Life and the riddle of things, the aim-
less strife,
The folly of Love, as who has proved
it all,
Enjoyed and suffered. In the lovely
eyes
A weary look, no other than the gaze
Which oftentimes as the rapid chariot
whirls,
And oftentimes by the glaring midnight
streets,
Gleams out and chills our thought.
And yet not guilt
Nor sorrow was it; only weariness,
No more, and still most lovely. As I
named
Her name in haste, she looked with
half surprise,
And thus she seemed to speak :
“ What? Dost thou know,
Thou too, the fatal glances which be-
guiled
Those strong rude chiefs of old? Has
not the gloom
Of this dim land withdrawn from out
mine eyes

The glamour which once filled them?
Does my cheek
Retain the round of youth and still
defy
The wear of immemorial centuries?
And this low voice, long silent, keeps
it still
The music of old time? Aye, in thine
eyes
I read it, and within thine eyes I see
Thou knowest me, and the story of my
life
Sung by the blind old bard when I was
dead,
And all my lovers dust. I know thee
not,
Thee nor thy gods, yet would I soothly
swear
I was not all to blame for what has
been,
The long fight, the swift death, the
woes, the tears,
The brave lives spent, the humble
homes upturn,
To gain one poor fair face. It was
not I
That curved these lips into this subtle
smile,
Or gave these eyes their fire, nor yet
made round
This supple frame. It was not I, but
Love,
Love mirroring himself in all things
fair,
Love that projects himself upon a life,
And dotes on his own image.
Ah! the days,
The weary years of Love and feasts and
gold,
The hurried flights, the din of clatter-
ing hoofs
At midnight, when the heroes dared
for me,

And bore me o'er the hills ; the swift
pursuits

Baffled and lost ; or when from isle to
isle

The high-oared galley spread its wings
and rose

Over the swelling surges, and I saw,
Time after time, the scarce familiar
town,

The shadowy hills, the well-loved
palaces,

The gleaming temples fade, and all for
me,

Me the dead prize, the shell, the soul-
less ghost,

The husk of a true woman ; the fond
words

Wasted on careless ears, that feigned
to hear,

Of love to me unloving ; the rich feasts,
The silken dalliance and soft luxury,
The fair observance and high reverence
For me who cared not, to whatever
land

My kingly lover snatched me. I have
known

How small a fence Love sets between
the king

And the strong hind, who breeds his
brood, and dies

Upon the field he tills. I have ex-
changed

People for people, crown for glittering
crown,

Through every change a queen, and
held my state

Hateful, and sickened in my soul to lie
Stretched on soft cushions to the lutes'
low sound;

While on the wasted fields the clang of
arms

Rang, and the foemen perished, and
swift death,

Hunger, and plague, and every phase
of woe

Vexed all the land for me. I have
heard the curse

Unspoken, when the wife widowed for
me

Clasped to her heart her orphans starved
for me ;

As I swept proudly by. I have prayed
the gods,

Hating my own fair face which wrought
such woe,

Some plague divine might light on it
and leave

My curse a ruin. Yet I think indeed
They had not cursed but pitied, those
true wives

Who mourned their humble lords, and
straining felt

The innocent thrill which swells the
mother's heart

Who clasps her growing boy ; had they
but known

The lifeless life, the pain of hypocrite
smiles,

The dead load of caresses simulated,
When Love stands shuddering by to see
his fires

Lit for the shrine of gold. What if
they felt

The weariness of loveless love which
grew

And through the jealous palace portals
seized

The caged unloving woman, sick of
toys,

Sick of her gilded chains, her ease,
herself,

Till for sheer weariness she flew to mee

Some new unloved seducer ? What if
they knew

No childish loving hands, or worse than
all,

Had borne them sullen to a sire un-loved,
And left them without pain? I might have been,
I too, a loving mother and chaste wife,
Had Fate so willed.

For I remember well
How one day straying from my father's hall,
Seeking anemones and violets,
A girl in Spring-time, when the heart makes Spring
Within the building bosom, that I came
Of a sudden through a wood upon a bay,
A little sunny land-locked bay, whose banks
Sloped gently downward to the yellow sand,
Where the blue wave creamed soft with fairy foam,
And oft the Nereids sported. As I strayed
Singing, with fresh-pulled violets in my hair
And bosom, and my hands were full of flowers,
I came upon a little milk-white lamb,
And took it in my arms and fondled it,
And wreathed its neck with flowers, and sang to it
And kissed it, and the Spring was in my life,
And I was glad.

And when I raised my eyes
Behold, a youthful shepherd with his crook
Stood by me and regarded as I lay,
Tall, fair, with clustering curls, and front that wore
A budding manhood. As I looked a

Came o'er me, lest he were some youthful god
Disguised in shape of man, so fair he was;
But when he spoke, the kindly face was full
Of manhood, and the large eyes full of fire
Drew me without a word, and all the flowers
Fell from me, and the little milk-white lamb
Strayed through the brake, and took with it the white
Fair years of childhood. Time fulfilled my being
With passion like a cup, and with one kiss
Left me a woman.

Ah! the precious hours,
When on the warm bank crowned with flowers we sat
And thought no harm, and his thin reed pipe made
Low music, and no witness of our love
Intruded, but the tinkle of the flock
Stole from the hill, and 'neath the odorous shade
We dreamed away the day, and watched the waves
Smile shoreward, and beyond the sylvan capes
The innumerable laughter of the sea!

Ah youth and love! So passed the happy days
Till twilight, and I stole as in a dream Homeward, and lived as in a happy dream,
And when they spoke answered as in a dream,
And through the darkness saw, as in a glass,

The happy, happy day, and thrilled and glowed
 And kept my love in sleep, and longed for dawn
 And scarcely stayed for hunger, and with morn
 Stole eager to the little wood, and fed My life with kisses. Ah! the joyous days
 Of innocence, when Love was Queen in heaven,
 And nature unreproved! Break they then still,
 Those azure circles, on a golden shore? Smiles there no glade upon the older earth
 Where spite of all, gray wisdom, and new gods,
 Young lovers dream within each other's arms
 Silent, by shadowy grove, or sunlit sea?

Ah days too fair to last! There came a night
 When I lay longing for my love, and knew
 Sudden the clang of hoofs, the broken doors,
 The clash of swords, the shouts, the groans, the stain
 Of red upon the marble, the fixed gaze
 Of dead and dying eyes,—that was the time
 When first I looked on death,—and when I woke,
 From my deep swoon, I felt the night air cool
 Upon my brow, and the cold stars look down,
 As swift we galloped o'er the darkling plain;
 And saw the chill sea glimpses slowly wake,

With arms unknown around me. When the dawn
 Broke swift, we panted on the pathless steeps,
 And so by plain and mountain till we came
 To Athens, where they kept me till I grew
 Fairer with every year, and many wooed,
 Heroes and chieftains, but I loved not one.
 And then the avengers came and snatched me back
 To Sparta. All the dark high-crested chiefs
 Of Argos wooed me, striving king with king
 For one fair foolish face, nor knew I kept
 No heart to give them. Yet since I was grown
 Weary of honeyed words and suit of love,
 I wedded a brave chief, dauntless and true.
 But what cared I? I could not prize at all
 His honest service. I had grown so tired
 Of loving and of love, that when they brought
 News that the fairest shepherd on the hills,
 Having done himself to death for his lost love,
 Lay, like a lovely statue, cold and white
 Upon the golden sand, I hardly knew
 More than a passing pang. Love, like a flower,
 Love, springing up too tall in a young breast,

The growth of morning, Life's too
scorching sun

Had withered long ere noon. Love,
like a flame

On his own altar offering up my heart,
Had burnt my being to ashes.

Was it love

That drew me then to Paris? He was
fair,

I grant you, fairer than a summer morn,
Fair with a woman's fairness, yet in
arms

A hero, but he never had my heart,
Not love for him allured me, but the
thirst

For freedom, if in more than thought I
erred,

And was not rapt but willing. For my
child

Born to an unloved father, loved me
not,

The fresh sea called, the galleys plunged,
and I

Fled willing from my prison and the
pain

Of undesired caresses, and the wind
Was fair, and on the third day as we
sailed,

My heart was glad within me when I
saw

The towers of Ilium rise beyond the

Ab, the long years, the melancholy
years,

The miserable melancholy years!
For soon the new grew old, and then I
grew

Weary of him, of all, of pomp and
state

And novel splendour. Yet at times I
knew

Some thrill of pride within me as I saw

From those high walls, a prisoner and
a foe,

The swift ships flock at anchor in the
bay,

The hasty landing and the flash of arms,
The lines of royal tents upon the plain,
The close-shut gates, the chivalry within
Issuing in all its pride to meet the shock
Of the bold chiefs without; so year by
year

The haughty challenge from the warring
hosts

Rang forth, and I with a divided heart
Saw victory incline, now here, now
there,

And helpless marked the Argive chiefs
I knew,

The spouse I left, the princely loves of
old,

Now with each other strive, and now
with Troy:

The brave pomp of the morn, the fair
strong limbs,

The glittering panoply, the bold young
hearts,

Athirst for fame of war, and with the
night

The broken spear, the shattered helm,
the plume

Dyed red with blood, the ghastly dying
face,

And nerveless limbs laid lifeless. And
I knew

The stainless Hector whom I could
have loved,

But that a happy love made blind his
eyes

To all my baleful beauty; fallen and
dragged

His noble, godlike head upon the sand
By young Achilles' chariot; him in turn
Fallen and slain; my fair false Paris
slain;

Plague, famine, battle, raging now
within,
And now without, for many a weary
year,
Summer and winter, till I loathed to
live,
Who was indeed, as well they said, the
Hell
Of men, and fleets, and cities. As I
stood
Upon the walls, oftentimes a longing
came,
Looking on rage, and fight, and blood,
and death,
To end it all, and dash me down and
die;
But no god helped me. Nay, one day
I mind
I would entreat them. ‘Pray you,
lords, be men.
What fatal charm is this which Até
gives
To one poor foolish face? Be strong,
and turn
In peace, forget this glamour, get you
home
With all your fleets and armies, to the
land
I love no longer, where your faithful
wives
Pine widowed of their lords, and your
young boys
Grow wild to manhood. I have nought
to give,
No heart, nor prize of love for any
man,
Nor recompense. I am the ghost alone
Of the fair girl ye knew; she still
abides,
If she still lives and is not wholly dead,
Stretched on a flowery bank upon the
sea
In fair heroic Argos. Leave this form

That is no other than the outward shell
Of a once loving woman.’
As I spake,
My pity fired my eyes and flushed my
cheek
With some soft charm; and as I spread
my hands,
The purple, glancing down a little, left
The marble of my breasts and one pink
bud
Upon the gleaming snows. And as I
looked
With a mixed pride and terror, I beheld
The brute rise up within them, and my
words
Fall barren on them. So I sat apart,
Nor ever more looked forth, while every
day
Brought its own woe.
The melancholy years,
The miserable melancholy years,
Crept onward till the midnight terror
came,
And by the glare of burning streets I
saw
Palace and temple reel in ruin and fall,
And the long-baffled legions, bursting
in
By gate and bastion, blunted sword and
spear
With unresisted slaughter. From my
tower
I saw the good old king; his kindly
eyes
In agony, and all his reverend hairs
Dabbled with blood, as the fierce
foeman thrust
And stabbed him as he lay; the youths,
the girls,
Whom day by day I knew, their silken
ease
And royal luxury changed for blood
and tears,

Haled forth to death or worse. Then
 a great hate
 Of life and fate seized on me, and I
 rose
 And rushed among them, crying, 'See,
 'tis I,
 I who have brought this evil ! Kill me !
 kill
 The fury that is I, yet is not I !
 And let my soul go outward through
 the wound
 Made clean by blood to Hades ! Let
 me die,
 Not these who did no wrong ! But
 not a hand
 Was raised, and all shrank back amazed,
 afraid,
 As from a goddess. Then I swooned
 and fell
 And knew no more, and when I woke
 I felt
 My husband's arms around me, and the
 wind
 Blew fair for Greece, and the beaked
 galley plunged ;
 And where the towers of Ilium rose of
 old,
 A pall of smoke above a glare of fire.

 What then in the near future ?
 . . . Ten long years
 Bring youth and love to that deep
 summer-tide
 When the full noisy current of our
 lives
 Creeps dumb through wealth of flowers.
 I think I knew
 Somewhat of peace at last, with my
 good Lord
 Who loved too much, to palter with
 the past,
 Flushed with the present. Young Her-

Had grown from child to woman. She
 was wed ;
 And was not I her mother ? At the
 pomp
 Of solemn nuptials and requited love,
 I prayed she might be happy, happier
 far
 Than ever I was ; so in tranquil ease
 I lived a queen long time, and because
 wealth
 And high observance can make sweet
 our days
 When youth's swift joy is past, I did
 requite
 With what I might, not love, the
 kindly care
 Of him I loved not ; pomps and robes
 of price
 And chariots held me. But when Fate
 cut short
 His life and love, his sons who were
 not mine
 Reigned in his stead, and hated me
 and mine :
 And knowing I was friendless, I sailed
 forth
 Once more across the sea, seeking for
 rest
 And shelter. Still I knew that in my
 eyes
 Love dwelt, and all the baleful charm
 of old
 Burned as of yore, scarce dimmed as
 yet by time :
 I saw it in the mirror of the sea,
 I saw it in the youthful seamen's
 eyes,
 And was half proud again I had such
 power
 Who now kept nothing else. So one
 calm eve,
 Behold, a sweet fair isle blushed like a

Upon the summer sea : there my swift
ship
Cast anchor, and they told me it was
Rhodes.

There, in a little wood above the sea,
Like that dear wood of yore, I wandered
forth
Forlorn, and all my seamen were apart,
And I, alone ; when at the close of day
I knew myself surrounded by strange
churls
With angry eyes, and one who ordered
them,
A woman, whom I knew not, but who
walked
In mien and garb a queen. She, with
the fire
Of hate within her eyes, 'Quick, bind
her, men !
I know her ; bind her fast !' Then to
the trunk
Of a tall plane they bound me with
rude cords
That cut my arms. And meantime,
far below,
The sun was gilding fair with dying
rays
Isle after isle and purple wastes of sea.

And then she signed to them, and all
withdrew
Among the woods and left us, face to
face,
Two women. Ere I spake, 'I know,'
she cried,
'I know that evil fairness. This it
was,
Or ever he had come across my life,
That made him cold to me, who had
my love
And left me half a heart. If all my
life

Of wedlock was but half a life, what
fiend
Came 'twixt my love and me, but that
fair face ?
What left his children orphans, but
that face ?
And me a widow ? Fiend ! I have
thee now ;
Thou hast not long to live. I will
requite
Thy murders ; yet, oh fiend ! that art
so fair,
Were it not haply better to deface
Thy fatal loveliness, and leave thee
bare
Of all thy baleful power ? And yet I
doubt,
And looking on thy face I doubt the
more,
Lest all thy dower of beauty be the
gift
Of Aphrodité, and I fear to fight
Against the immortal Gods.'

Eyen with the word,
And she relenting, all the riddle of
life
Flashed through me, and the inextric-
able coil
Of Being, and the immeasurable depths
And irony of Fate, burst on my thought,
And left me smiling in the eyes of
death,
With this deep smile thou seëst. Then
with a shriek
The woman leapt on me, and with
blind rage
Strangled my life. And when she had
done the deed
She swooned, and those her followers
hasting back
Fell prone upon their knees before the
corpse

As to a goddess. Then one went and brought
A sculptor, and within a jewelled shrine
They set me in white marble, bound
 to a tree
Of marble. And they came and knelt
 to me,
Young men and maidens, through the
secular years,
While the old gods bore sway, but I
 was here,
And now they kneel no longer, for the
 world
Has gone from beauty.

But I think, indeed,
They well might worship still, for never
 yet
Was any thought or thing of beauty
 born
Except with suffering. That poor
 wretch who thought
I injured her, stealing the foolish heart
Which she prized but I could not, what
 knew she
Of that I suffered? She had loved her
 love,
Though unrequited, and had borne to
 him
Children who loved her. What if she
 had been
Loved yet unloving : all the fire of love
Burnt out before love's time in one
 brief blaze
Of passion. Ah, poor fool ! I pity her,
Being blest and yet unthankful, and
 forgive,
Now that she is a ghost as I, the hand
Which loosed my load of life. For
 scarce indeed
Could any god who cares for mortal
 men
Have ever kept me happy. I had tired
Of simple loving, doubtless, as I tired

Of splendour and being loved. There
 be some souls
For which love is enough, content to
 bear
From youth to age, from chesnut locks
 to gray
The load of common, uneventful life
And penury. But I was not of these ;
I know not now, if it were best indeed
That I had reared my simple shepherd
 brood,
And lived and died unknown in some
 poor hut
Among the Argive hills ; or lived a
 queen
As I did, knowing every day that
 dawned
Some high emprise and glorious, and
 in death
To fill the world with song. Not the
 same meed
The gods mete out for all, or She, the
 dread
Necessity, who rules both gods and men,
Some to dishonour, some to honour
 moulds,
To happiness some, some to unhappi-
 ness.
We are what Zeus has made us, dis-
 cords playing
In the great music, but the harmony
Is sweeter for them, and the great
 spheres ring
In one accordant hymn.

But thou, if e'er
There come a daughter of thy love, oh
 pray
To all thy gods, lest haply they should
 mar
Her life with too great beauty!"

So she ceased,
The fairest woman that the poet's
 dream

Or artist hand has fashioned. All the
gloom
Seemed lightened round her, and I
heard the sound
Of her melodious voice when all was
still,
And the dim twilight took her.

Which steals in summer from the gates
of dawn
To kiss the fields of spice, and wakes
to life
Their slumbering perfume, through this
silent land
Of whispering voices and of half-closed
eyes,
Where scarce a footstep sounds, nor
any strain
Of earthly song, thou cam'st; and
suddenly
The pale cheeks flushed a little, the
murmured words
Rose to a faint, thin treble; the throng
of ghosts
Pacing along the sunless ways and
still,
Felt a new life. Thou camest, dear,
and straight
The dull cold river broke in sparkling
foam,
The pale and scentless flowers grew
perfumed; last
To the dim chamber, where with the
sad queen
I sat in gloom, and silently inwove
Dead wreaths of amaranths; thy music
came
Laden with life, and I, who seemed to
know
Not life's voice only, but my own,
arose
Along the hollow pathways following
The sound which brought back earth
and life and love,
And memory and longing. Yet I went
With half-reluctant footsteps, as of
one
Whom passion draws, or some high
fantasy,
Despite himself, because some subtle
spell,

Next there came
Two who together walked: one with
a lyre
Of gold, which gave no sound; the
other hung
Upon his breast, and closely clung to
him,
Spent in a tender longing. As they
came,
I heard her gentle voice recounting o'er
Some ancient tale, and these the words
she said:

"Dear voice and lyre now silent,
which I heard
Across yon sullen river, bringing to me
All my old life, while he, the ferry-
man,
Heard and obeyed, and the grim
monster heard
And frowned on you. Joyous thou
cam'st and free
Like a white sunbeam from the dear
blithe earth,
Where suns shone clear, and moons
beamed bright, and streams
Laughed with a rippling music,—nor as
here
The dumb stream stole, the veiled sky
slept, the fields
Were lost in twilight. Like a truant
breeze,

Part born of dread to cross that sullen
 stream
 And its grim guardians, part of secret
 shame
 Of the young airs and freshness of the
 earth,
 Being that I was, enchain'd me.
 Then at last,
 From voice and lyre so high a strain
 arose
 As trembled on the utter verge of
 being,
 And thrilling, pour'd out life. Thus
 nearer drawn
 I walked with thee, enclosed by
 honeyed sound
 And soft environments of harmony,
 Beyond the ghostly gates, beyond the
 dim
 Calm fields, where the beetle hummed
 and the pale owl
 Stole noiseless from the copse, and the
 white blooms
 Stretched thin for lack of sun : so fair
 a light
 Offspring of consonant airs environed
 me.
 Nor looked I backward, as we seemed
 to move
 To some high goal of thought and life
 and love,
 Like twin birds flying fast with equal
 wing
 Out of the night, to meet the coming
 sun
 Above a sea. But on thy dear fair
 eyes,
 The eyes that well I knew on the old
 earth,
 I looked not, for with still averted
 gaze
 Thou leddest, and I followed ; for,
 indeed,

While that high strain was sounding,
 I was rapt
 In faith and a high courage, driving out
 All doubt and discontent and womanish
 fear,
 Nay, even love itself. But when awhile
 It sank a little, or seemed to sink and
 fall
 To lower levels, seeing that use makes
 blunt
 The too accustomed ear, straightway,
 desire
 To look once more on thy recovered
 eyes
 Seized me, and oft I called with piteous
 voice,
 Beseeching thee to turn. But thou
 long time
 Wert even as one unmindful, with
 grave sign
 And waving hand, denying. At the
 last,
 When now we neared the stream, on
 whose far shore
 Lay life, great terror took me, and I
 shrieked
 Thy name, as in despair. Then thou,
 as one
 Who knows him set in some great
 jeopardy,
 A swift death fronting him on either
 hand,
 Didst slowly turning gaze ; and lo ! I
 saw
 Thine eyes grown awful, life that
 looked on death,
 Clear purity on black and cankered sin,
 The immortal on corruption,—not the
 eyes
 That erst I knew in life, but dread-
 fuller,
 And stranger. As I looked, I seemed
 to swoon,

Some blind force whirled me back, and
when I woke
I saw thee vanish in the middle stream,
A speck on the dull waters, taking
with thee
My life, and leaving Love with me.
But I
Not for myself bewail, but all for thee,
Who, but for me, wert now among the
stars
With thy great Lord; I sitting at thy
feet:
But now the fierce and unrestrained rout
Of passions woman-natured, finding
thee
Scornful of love within thy lonely cell,
With blind rage falling on thee, tore
thy limbs,
And left them to the Muses' sepulture,
While thy soul dwells in Hades. But
I wail
My weakness always, who for Love
destroyed
The life that was my Love. I prithee,
dear,
Forgive me if thou canst, who hast lost
heaven
To save a loving woman."

He with voice
Sweeter than any mortal melody,
And plaintive as the music that is
made
By the Aolian strings, or the sad bird
That sings of summer nights :

" Eurydice,
Dear love, be comforted ; not once
alone
That which thou mournest is, but day
by day
Some lonely soul, which walks apart
and feeds
On high hill pastures, far from herds
of men,

Comes to the low fat fields, and sunny
vales
Joyous with fruits and flowers, and the
white arms
Of laughing love ; and there awhile he
stays
Content, forgetting all the joys he
knew,
When first the morning broke upon
the hills,
And the keen air breathed from the
Eastern gates
Like a pure draught of wine ; forget-
ting all
The strains which float, as from a
nearer heaven,
To him who treads at dawn the un-
trodden snows,
While all the warm world sleeps ;—
forgetting these
And all things that have been. And
if he gain
To raise to his own heights the simpler
souls
That dwell upon the plains, the un-
tutored thought,
The muscleless lives, the unawakened
brain
That yet might soar, then is he blest
indeed.
But if he fail, then, leaving love
behind,
The wider love of the race, the closer
love
Of some congenial soul, he turns again
To the old difficult steeps, and there
alone
Pines, till the widowed passions of his
heart
Tear him and rend his soul, and drive
him down
To the low plains he left. And there
he dwells,

Missing the nearer skies, and the white peaks,
And the keen air of old ; but in their stead
Finding the soft sweet sun of the vale, the clouds
Which veil the heavens indeed, but give the rains
That feed the streams of life and make earth green,
And bring at last the harvest. So I walk
In this dim land content with thee, O Love,
Untouched by any yearning of regret
For those old days ; nor that the lyre which made
Erewhile such potent music now is dumb ;
Nor that the voice that once could move the earth
(Zeus speaking through it), speaks in household words
Of homely love : Love is enough for me
With thee, O dearest ; and perchance at last,
Zeus willing, this dumb lyre and whispered voice
Shall wake, by Love inspired, to such clear note
As soars above the stars, and swelling, lifts
Our souls to highest heaven."

Then he stooped,
And, folded in one long embrace, they went
And faded. And I cried, "Oh, strong God, Love,
Mightier than Death and Hell ! "

And then I chanced
On a fair woman, whose sad eyes were full
Of a fixed self-reproach, like his who knows
Himself the fountain of his grief, and pines
In self-inflicted sorrow. As I spake
Enquiring of her grief, she answered thus :

"Stranger, thou seest of all the shades below
The most unhappy. Others sought their love
In death, and found it, dying ; but for me
The death that took me, took from me my love,
And left me comfortless. No load I bear
Like those dark wicked women, who have slain
Their Lords for lust or anger, whom the dread
Propitious Ones within the pit below Punish and purge of sin ; only unfaith, If haply want of faith be not a crime Blacker than murder, when we fail to trust
One worthy of all faith, and folly bring
No harder recompense than comes of scorn
And loathing of itself.
Ah, fool, fool, fool,
Who didst mistrust thy love, who was the best,
And truest, manliest soul with whom the gods
Have ever blest the earth ; so brave, so strong,
Fired with such burning hate of powerful ill,

So loving of the race, so swift to raise
 The strenuous arm and ponderous club,
 and smite
 All monstrous growths with ruin—Zeus
 himself
 Showed scarce more mighty—and yet
 was the while
 A very man, not cast in mould too
 fine
 For human love, but oftentimes snared
 and caught
 By womanish wiles, fast held within
 the net
 His passions wove. Oh, it was joy to
 hear
 How he went forth, the champion of
 his race,
 Conquering in warfare as in love, now
 bent
 To more than human tasks, now lapt
 in ease,
 Now suffering, now enjoying. Strong,
 vast soul,
 Tuned to heroic deeds, and set on high
 Above the range of common petty
 sins—
 Too high to mate with an unequal
 soul,
 Too full of striving for contented days.

 Ah me, how well I do recall the
 cause
 Of all our ills! I was a happy bride
 When that dark Até which pursues the
 steps
 Of heroes—innocent blood-guiltiness—
 Drove us to exile, and I joyed to be
 His own, and share his pain. To a
 swift stream
 Fleeing we came, where a rough ferry-
 man
 Waited, more brute than man. My
 hero plunged . . .

In those fierce depths and battled with
 their flow,
 And with great labour gained the
 strand, and bade
 The monster speed ye to him. But
 with lust
 And brutal cunning in his eyes, the
 thing
 Seized me and turned to fly with me,
 when swift
 An arrow hissed from the unerring bow,
 Pierced him, and loosed his grasp. Then
 as his eyes
 Grew glazed in death there came in
 them a gleam
 Of what I know was hate, and he said,
 ‘Take
 This white robe. It is costly. See,
 my blood
 Has stained it but a little. I did wrong :
 I know it, and repent me. If there
 come
 A time when he grows cold—for all the
 race
 Of heroes wander, nor can any love
 Fix theirs for long—take it and wrap
 him in it,
 And he shall love again.’ Then, from the strange
 Deep look within his eyes I shrank in
 fear,
 And left him half in pity, and I went
 To meet my Lord, who rose from that
 fierce stream
 Fair as a god. Ah me, the weary days
 We women live, spending our anxious
 souls,
 Consumed with jealous fancies, hunger-
 ing still
 For the beloved voice and ear and eye,
 And hungering all in vain! For life is
 more

To youthful manhood than to sit at home
 Before the hearth to watch the children's ways,
 And lead the life of petty household care
 Which doth content us women. Day by day
 I pined in Trachis for my love, while he,
 Now in some warlike exploit busied, now
 Slaying some monster, now at some fair court,
 Resting awhile till some new enterprise
 Called him, returned not. News of treacheries
 Avenged, friends succoured, dreadful monsters slain,
 Came from him: always triumph, always fame,
 And honour, and success, and reverence,
 And sometimes, words of love for me who pined
 For more than words, and would have gone to him
 But that the toils of such high errantry
 Asked more than woman's strength.
 So the slow years
 Vexed me alone in Trachis, left forlorn
 In solitude, nor hearing at the gate
 The frank and cheering voice, nor on the stair
 The heavy tread, nor feeling the strong arm
 Around me in the darkling night, when all
 My being ran slow. Last, subtle whispers came
 Of womanish wiles which kept my Lord from me,
 And one who, young and fair, a fresh-blown life
 And virgin, younger, fairer far than I

When first he loved me, held him in the toils
 Of scarce dissembled love. Not easily
 Might I believe this evil, but at last
 The oft-repeated malice finding me
 Forlorn, and sitting imp-like at my ear,
 Possessed me, and the fire of jealous love
 Raged through my veins, not turned as yet to hate—
 Too well I loved for that—but breeding in me
 Unfaith in him. Love, setting him so high
 And self so low, betrayed me, and I prayed,
 Constrained to hold him false, the immortal gods
 To make him love again.
 But still he came not.
 And still the maddening rumours worked, and still
 'Fair, young, and a king's daughter,' the same words
 Smote me and pierced me. Oh, there is no pain
 In Hades—nay, nor deepest Hell itself,
 Like that of jealous hearts, the torture-pain
 Which racked my life so long.
 Till one fair morn
 There came a joyful message. 'He has come!
 And at the shrine upon the promontory,
 The fair white shrine upon the purple sea,
 He waits to do his solemn sacrifice
 To the immortal gods; and with him comes
 A young maid beautiful as Dawn.'
 Then I,
 Mingling despair with love, rapt in deep joy

That he was come, plunged in the depths of hell
 That she came too, bethought me of the robe
 The Centaur gave me, and the words he spake,
 Forgetting the deep hatred in his eyes,
 And all but love, and sent a messenger
 Bidding him wear it for the sacrifice
 To the Immortals, knowing not at all
 Whom Fate decreed the victim.

Shall my soul
 Forget the agonized message which he sent,
 Bidding me come? For that accursed robe,
 Stained with the poisonous accursed blood,
 Even in the midmost flush of sacrifice Clung to him a devouring fire, and ate
 The piteous flesh from his dear limbs, and stung
 His great soft soul to madness. When I came,
 Knowing it was my work, he bent on me,
 Wise as a god through suffering and the near
 Inevitable Death, so that no word Of mine was needed, such a tender look
 Of mild reproach as smote me.
 'Couldst not thou Trust me, who never loved as I love thee?
 What need was there of magical arts to draw
 The love that never wavered? I have lived
 As he lives who through perilous paths must pass,
 And lifelong trials, striving to keep down
 The brute within him, born of too much strength

And sloth and vacuous days; by difficult toils,
 Labours endured, and hard-fought fights with ill,
 Now vanquished, now triumphant; and sometimes,
 In intervals of too long labour, finding His nature grown too strong for him, falls prone
 Awhile a helpless prey, then once again Rises and spurns his chains, and fares anew
 Along the perilous ways. Dearest, I would
 That thou wert wedded to some knight who stayed
 At home within thy gates, and were content
 To see thee happy. But for me the fierce
 Rude energies of life, the mighty thews, The god sent hate of Wrong, these drove me forth
 To quench the thirst of battle. See, this maid,
 This is the bride I destined for our son Who grows to manhood. Do thou see to her
 When I am dead, for soon I know again The frenzy comes, and with it leasing, death.
 Go, therefore, ere I harm thee when my strength
 Has lost its guidance. Thou wert rich in love,
 Be now as rich in faith. Dear, for thy wrong
 I do forgive thee.' When I saw the glare
 Of madness fire his eyes, and my ears heard
 The groans the torture wrung from his great soul,

I fled with broken heart to the white
shrine,
And knelt in prayer, but still my sad
ear took
The agony of his cries.

Then I who knew
There was no hope in god or man for
me
Who had destroyed my Love, and with
him slain
The champion of the suffering race of
men,
And that my jealous soul, though
innocent
Of blood, was guilty of unfaith and vile
Mistrust, and wrapt in weakness like a
cloak,
And made the innocent tool of hate
and wrong,
Against all love and good ; grown sick
and filled
With hatred of myself, rose from my
knees,
And went a little space apart, and found
A gnarled tree on the cliff, and with
my scarf
Strangling myself, swung lifeless.

But in death
I found him not. For, building a vast
pile
Of scented woods on Oeta, as they tell,
My hero with his own hand lighted it,
And when the mighty pyre flamed far
and wide
Over all lands and seas, he climbed
on it
And laid him down to die ; but pitying
Zeus,
Before the swift flames reached him, in
a cloud
Descending, snatched the strong brave
soul to heaven,
And set him amid the stars.

Therefore am I
Of all the blameless shades within this
place
The most unhappy, if of blame, indeed,
I bear no load. For what is Sin itself,
But Error when we miss the road which
leads
Up to the gate of heaven ? Ignorance !
What if we be the cause of ignorance ?
Being blind who might have seen ! Yet
do I know
But self-inflicted pain, nor stain there is
Upon my soul such as they bear who
know
The dreadful scourge with which the
stern judge still
Lashes their sins. I am forgiven, I
know,
Who loved so much, and one day, if
Zeus will,
I shall go free from hence, and join my
Lord,
And be with him again."

And straight I seemed,
Passing, to look on some tormented life,
Which knows to-day the irony of Fate
In self-inflicted pain.

Together clung
The ghosts whom next I saw, bound
three in one
By some invisible bond. A sire, of port
God-like as Zeus, to whom on either
hand
A tender stripling clung. I knew them
well,
As all men know them. One fair youth
spake low :
" Father, it does not pain me now, to
be

Drawn close to thee, and by a double bond,
With this my brother." And the other : " Nay;
Nor me, O father ; but I bless the chain
Which binds our souls in union. If some trace
Of pain still linger, heed it not—'tis past :
Still let us cling to thee."

He with grave eyes
Full of great tenderness, upon his sons
Looked with the father's gaze, that is
so far
More sweet, and sad, and tender, than
the gaze
Of mothers,—now on this one, now on
that,
Regarding them. " Dear sons, whom
on the earth
I loved and cherished, it was hard to
watch
Your pain ; but now 'tis finished, and
we stand
For ever, through all future days of time,
Symbols of patient suffering undeserved,
Endured and vanquished. Yet sad
memory still
Brings back our time of trial.

The young day
Broke fair when I, the dread Poseidon's
priest,
Joyous because the usholy strife was
done,
And seeing the blue waters now left free
Of hostile keels—save where upon the
verge
Far off the white sails faded—rose at
dawn,
And white robed, and in garb of sacrifice,
And with the sacred fillet round my
brows,
Stood at the altar ; and behind, ye twain,

Decked by your mother's hand with
new-cleansed robes,
And with fresh flower-wreathed chaplets
on your curls,
Attended, and your clear young voices
made
Music that touched your father's eyes
with tears,
If not the careless gods. I seem to hear
Those high sweet accents mounting in
the hymn
Which rose to all the blessed gods who
dwelt
Upon the far Olympus—Zeus, the Lord,
And Sovereign Here, and the immortal
choir
Of Deities, but chiefly to the dread
Poseidon, him who sways the purple
sea
As with a sceptre, shaking the fixed
earth
With stress of thundering surges. By
the shrine
The meek-eyed victim, for the sacrifice,
Stood with his gilded horns. The
hymns were done,
And I in act to strike, when all the
crowd
Who knelt behind us, with a common
fear
Cried, with a cry that well might freeze
the blood,
And then, with fearful glances towards
the sea,
Fled, leaving us alone—me, the high
priest,
And ye, the acolytes ; forlorn of men,
Alone, but with our god.
But we stirred not
We dared not fly, who in the solemn
act
Of worship, and the ecstasy which
comes

To the believer's soul, saw heaven
* revealed,
The mysteries unveiled, the inner sky
Which meets the enraptured gaze.
How should we fear
Who thus were god-circled ! So we
stood
While the long ritual spent itself, nor
cast
An eye upon the sea. Till as I came
To that great act which offers up a
life
Before life's Lord, and the full mystery
Was trembling to completion, quick I
heard
A stifled cry of agony, and knew
My children's voices. And the father's
heart,
Which is far more than rite or service
done
By man for god, seeing that it is divine
And comes from God to men—this
rising in me,
Constrained me, and I ceased my prayer,
and turned
To succour you, and lo ! the awful
coils
Which crushed your lives already,
bound me round
And crushed me also, as you clung to
me,
In common death. Some god had
heard the prayer,
And lo ! we were ourselves the sacri-
fice—
The priest, the victim, the accepted
life,
The blood, the pain, the salutary loss.

Was it not better thus to cease and die
Together in one blest moment, mid the
flush
And ecstasy of worship, and to know

Ourselves the victims? They were
wrong who taught
That 'twas some jealous goddess thus
assailed
Our lives, revengeful for discovered
wiles,
Or hateful of our Troy. Not readily
Should such base passions sway the
immortal gods ;
But rather do I hold it sooth indeed
That Zeus himself it was, who pitying
The ruin he foreknew, yet might not
stay,
Since mightier Fate decreed it, sent in
haste
Those dreadful messengers, and bade
them take
The pious lives he loved, before the
din
Of midnight slaughter woke, and the
fair town
Flamed pitifully to the skies, and all
Was blood and ruin. Surely it was
best
To die as we did, and in death to live,
A vision for all ages of high pain
Which passes into beauty, and is
merged
In one accordant whole, as discords
merge
In that great Harmony which ceaseless
rings
From the tense chords of life, than to
have lived
Our separate lives, and died our separate
deaths,
And left no greater mark than drops
which rain
Upon the unwrinkled sea. Those hosts
which fell
Before the Scaean gate upon the sand,
Nor found a bard to sing their fate, but
left

Their bones to dogs and kites—were
they more blest
Than we who, in the people's sight
before
Ilium's unshattered towers, lay down
to die
Our swift miraculous death? Dear
sons, and good,
Dear children of my love, now doubly
dear
For this our common sorrow; suffer-
ing binds
Not gyves of pain alone, but fashions
for us
A chain of purest gold, which though
withdrawn
Or felt no longer, knits 'tween soul and
soul,
Indissoluble bonds, and draws our
lives
So close, that though the individual life
Be merged, there springs a common
life which grows
To such dread beauty, as has power to
take
The sting from sorrow, and transform
the pain
Into transcendent joy: as from the
storm
The unearthly rainbow draws its
myriad hues
And steeps the world in fairness. All
our lives
Are notes that fade and sink, and so
are merged
In the full harmony of Being. Dear
sons,
Cling closer to me. Life nor Death
has torn
Our lives asunder, as for some, but
drawn
Their separate strands together in a
knot

Closer than Life itself, stronger than
Death,
Insoluble as Fate." Then they three clung
Together—the strong father and young
sons,
And in their loving eyes I saw the
Pain
Fade into Joy, Suffering in Beauty lost,
And Death in Love!

By a still sullen pool,
Into its dark depths gazing, lay the
ghost
Whom next I passed. In form, a
comely youth,
Scarce passed from boyhood. Golden
curls were his,
And wide blue eyes. The semblance
of a smile
Came on his lip—a girl's but for the
down
Which hardly shaded it; but the pale
check
Was soft as any maiden's, and his robe
Was virginal, and at his breast he bore
The perfumed amber cup which, when
March comes,
Gems the dry woods and windy wolds,
and speaks
The resurrection.
Looking up, he said:
"Methought I saw her then, my love,
my fair,
My beauty, my ideal; the dim clouds
Listed, methought, a little—or was it
Fond Fancy only? For I know that
here
No sunbeam cleaves the twilight, but
a mist

Creeps over all the sky and fields and pools,
And blots them ; and I know I seek in vain
My earth-sought beauty, nor can Fancy bring
An answer to my thought from these blind depths
And unawakened skies. Yet has use made
The quest so precious, that I keep it here,
Well knowing it is vain.

On the old earth 'twas otherwise, when in fair Thessaly
I walked regardless of all nymphs who sought
My love, but sought in vain, whether it were
Dryad or Naiad from the woods or streams,
Or white-robed Oread fleeting on the side
Of fair Olympus, echoing back my sighs,
In vain, for through the mountains day by day
I wandered, and along the foaming brooks,
And by the pine-woods dry, and never took
A thought for love, nor ever 'mid the throng
Of loving nymphs who knew me beautiful
I dallied, unregarding ; till they said
Some died for love of me, who loved not one.
And yet I cared not, wandering still alone
Amid the mountains by the scented pines.

Till one fair day, when all the hills were still,
Nor any breeze made murmur through the boughs,
Nor cloud was on the heavens, I wandered slow,
Leaving the nymphs who fain with dance and song
Had kept me 'midst the glades, and strayed away
Among the pines, enwrapt in fantasy,
And by the beechen dells which clothe the feet
Of fair Olympus, wrapt in fantasy,
Weaving the thin and unembodied shapes
Which Fancy loves to body forth, and leave
In marble or in song ; and so strayed down
To a low sheltered vale above the plains,
Where the lush grass grew thick, and the stream stayed
Its garrulous tongue ; and last upon the bank
Of a still pool I came, where was no flow
Of water, but the depths were clear as air,
And nothing but the silvery gleaming side
Of tiny fishes stirred. There lay I down
Upon the flowery bank, and scanned the deep,
Half in a waking dream.

Then swift there rose, from those enchanted depths, a face more fair
Than ever I had dreamt of, and I knew My sweet long-sought ideal : the thick curly,

Like these, were golden, and the white
robe showed

Like this; but for the wondrous eyes
and lips,

The tender loving glance, the sunny
smile

Upon the rosy mouth, these knew I
not,

Not even in dreams; and yet I seemed
to trace

Myself within them too, as who should
find

His former self expunged, and him
transformed

To some high thin ideal, separate
From what he was, by some invisible
bar,

And yet the same in difference. As I
moved

My arms to clasp her to me, lo! she
moved

Her eager arms to mine, smiled to my
smile,

Looked love to love, and answered
longing eyes

With longing. When my full heart
burst in words,

'Dearest, I love thee,' lo! the lovely
lips,

'Dearest, I love thee,' sighed, and
through the air

The love-lorn echo rang. But when I
longed

To answer kiss with kiss, and stooped
my lips

To her sweet lips in that long thrill
which strains

Soul unto soul, the cold lymph came
between

And chilled our love, and kept us
separate souls

Which fain would mingle, and the self-
same heaven

Rose, a blue vault above us, and no
shade

Of earthly thing obscured us, as we
lay

Two reflex souls, one and yet different,
Two sundered souls longing to be
at one.

There, all day long, until the light was
gone

And took my love away, I lay and
loved

The image, and when night was come,
'Farewell,'

I whispered, and she whispered back,
'Farewell,'

With oh, such yearning! Many a day
we spent

By that clear pool together all day long.
And many a clouded hour on the wet
grass

I lay beneath the rain, and saw her not,
And sickened for her; and sometimes
the pool

Was thick with flood, and hid her; and
sometimes

Some cold wind ruffled those clear
wells, and left

But glimpses of her, and I rose at eve
Unsatisfied, a cold chill in my limbs
And fever at my heart: until, too soon!
The summer faded, and the skies were
hid,

And my love came not, but a quench-
less thirst

Wasted my life. And all the winter
long

The bright sun shone not, or the thick
ribbed ice

Obscured her, and I pined for her, and
knew

My life ebb from me, till I grew too
weak

To seek her, fearing I should see no more
 My dear. And so the long dead winter waned
 And the slow spring came back.
 And one blithe day,
 When life was in the wood, and the birds sang,
 And soft airs fanned the hills, I knew again
 Some gleam of hope within me, and again
 With feeble limbs crawled forth, and felt the spring
 Blossom within me; and the flower-starred glades,
 The bursting trees, the building nests, the songs,
 The hurry of life revived me; and I crept,
 Ghost like, amid the joy, until I flung
 My panting frame, and weary nerveless limbs,
 Down by the cold still pool.
 And lo! I saw
 My love once more, not beanteous as of old,
 But oh, how changed! the fair young cheek grown pale,
 The great eyes, larger than of yore, gaze forth
 With a sad yearning look; and a great pain
 And pity took me which were more than love,
 And with a loud and wailing voice I cried,
 'Dearest, I come again. I pine for thee,'
 And swift she answered back, 'I pine for thee;
 'Come to me, oh, my own,' I cried, and she—;

Come to me, oh, my own. Then with a cry
 Of love I joined myself to her, and plunged
 Beneath the icy surface with a kiss,
 And fainted, and am here.
 And now, indeed, I know not if it was myself I sought, As some tell, or another. For I hold That what we seek is but our other self,
 Other and higher, neither wholly like Nor wholly different, the half-life the gods
 Retained when half was given—one the man
 And one the woman; and I longed to round
 The imperfect essence by its complement,
 For only thus the perfect life stands forth Whole, self-sufficing. Worse it is to live
 Ill-mated than imperfect, and to move From a false centre, not a perfect sphere,
 But with a crooked bias sent oblique Athwart life's furrows. 'Twas myself, indeed,
 Thus only that I sought, that lovers use To see in that they love, not that which is,
 But that their fancy feigns, and view themselves
 Reflected in their love, yet glorified, And finer and more pure.
 Wherefore it is : All love which finds its own ideal mate Is happy—happy that which gives itself Unto itself, and keeps, through long calm years,
 The tranquil image in its eyes, and knows

Fulfilment and is blest, and day by day
 Wears love like a white flower, nor holds it less
 Though sharp winds bite, or hot suns fade, or age
 Sully its perfect whiteness, but inhales Its fragrance, and is glad. But happier still
 He who long seeks a high goal unattained,
 And wearies for it all his days, nor knows Possession sate his thirst, but still pursues
 The fleeting loveliness—now seen, now lost,
 But evermore grown fairer, till at last He stretches forth his arms and takes the fair
 In one long rapture, and its name is Death."

For in those tender flowers is hid the life
 That once was mine. All things are bound in one
 In earth and heaven, nor is there any gulf
 'Twixt things that live,—the flower that was a life,
 The life that is a flower,—but one sure chain
 Binds all, as now I know.

If there are still Fair Orcads on the hills, say to them, sir,
 They must no longer pine for me, but find Some worthier lover, who can love again ;
 For I have found my love."

And to the pool He turned, and gazed with dreaming eyes, and showed Fair as an angel.

Thus he ; and seeing me stand grave :
 " Farewell.
 If ever thou shouldst happen on a wood In Thessaly, upon the plain-ward spurs Of fair Olympus, take the path which winds
 Through the close vale, and thou shalt see the pool
 Where once I found my life. And if in Spring
 Thou go there, round the margin thou shalt know
 These amber blooms bend meekly, smiling down
 Upon the crystal surface. Pluck them not.
 But kneel a little while, and breathe a prayer
 To the fair god of Love, and let them be.

Leaving him enwrappt In musings, to a gloomy pass I came Between dark rocks, where scarce a gleam of light,
 Not even the niggard light of that dim land,
 Might enter ; and the soil was black and bare,
 Nor even the thin growths which scarcely clothed The higher fields might live. Hard by a cave
 Which sloped down steeply to the lowest depths,
 Whence dreadful sounds ascended, seated still,

Her head upon her hands, I saw a maid
 With eyes fixed on the ground—not Tartarus
 It was, but Hades ; and she knew no pain,
 Except her painful thought. Yet there it seemed,
 As here, the unequal measure which awaits
 The adjustment, and meanwhile, inspires the strife
 Which rears life's palace walls ; and fills the sail
 Which bears our bark across unsathomed seas,
 To its last harbour ; this prevailed there too,
 And 'twas a luckless shade which sat and wept
 Amid the gloom, though blameless. Suddenly,
 She raised her head, and lo ! the long curls, writhed,
 Tangled, and snake-like—as the dripping hair
 Of a dead girl who freed from life and shame,
 From out the cruel wintry flow, is laid
 Stark on the snow with dreadful staring eyes
 Like hers. For when she raised her eyes to mine,
 They chilled my blood, so great a woe they bore ;
 And as she gazed, wide-eyed, I knew my pulse
 Beat slow, and my limbs stiffen. Then they wore,
 At length, a softer look, and life revived
 Within my breast as thus she softly spoke :

" Nay, friend, I would not harm thee. I have known Great sorrow, and sometimes it racks me still, And turns me into stone, and makes my eyes As dreadful as of yore ; and yet it comes But seldom, as thou sawest, now, for Time And Death have healing hands. Only I love To sit within the darkness here, nor face The throng of happier ghosts ; if any ghost Of happiness come here. For on the earth They wronged me bitterly, and turned to stone My heart, till scarce I knew if e'er I was The happy girl of yore. That youth who dreams Up yonder by the margin of the lake, Knew but a cold ideal love, but me Love in unearthly guise, but bodily form, Seized and betrayed.

I was a priestess once, Of stern Athéné, doing day by day Due worship ; raising, every dawn that came, My cold pure hymns to take her virgin ear ; Nor sporting with the joyous company Of youths and maids, who at the neighbouring shrine Of Aphrodité served. Nor dance nor song Allured me, nor the pleasant days of youth And twilights 'mid the vines. They held me cold

Who were my friends in childhood.
 For my soul
 Was virginal, and at the virgin shrine
 I knelt, athirst for knowledge. Day by
 day
 The long cold ritual sped, the liturgies
 Were done, the barren hymns of praise
 went up
 Before the goddess, and the ecstasy
 Of faith possessed me wholly, till almost
 I knew not I was woman. Yet I knew
 That I was fair to see, and fit to share
 Some natural honest love, and bear the
 load
 Of children like the rest; only my soul
 Was lost in higher yearnings.

Like a god,
 He burst upon those pallid lifeless days,
 Bringing fresh airs and salt, as from
 the sea,
 And wrecked my life. How should a
 virgin know
 Deceit, who never at the joyous shrine
 Of Cypris knelt, but ever lived apart,
 And so grew guilty? For if I had
 spent
 My days among the throng, either my
 fault
 Were blameless, or undone. For
 innocence
 The tempter spreads his net. For
 innocence
 The gods keep all their terrors. Inno-
 cence
 It is that bears the burden, which for
 guilt
 Is lightened, and the spoiler goes his
 way,
 Uncaring, joyous, leaving her alone,
 The victim and unfriended.

Was it just
 In her, my mistress, who had had my
 youth,

To wreak such vengeance on me? I
 had erred,
 It may be; but on him, whose was the
 guilt,
 No heaven-sent vengeance lighted, but
 he sped
 Away to other hearts across the deep,
 Careless and free; but me, the cold
 stern eyes
 Of the pure goddess withered; and the
 scorn
 Of maids, despised before, and the
 great blank
 Of love, this wrung my heart, whose
 love was gone,
 And froze my blood; set on my brow
 despair,
 And turned my gaze to stone, and filled
 my eyes
 With horror, and stiffened the soft
 curls which once
 Lay smooth and fair into such snake-
 like rings
 As made my aspect fearful. All who
 saw,
 Shrank from me and grew cold, and
 felt the warm,
 Full tide of life freeze in them, seeing
 in me
 Love's work, who sat wrapt up and
 lost in shame,
 As in a cloak, consuming my own heart,
 And was in hell already. As they gazed
 Upon me, my despair looked forth so
 cold
 From out my eyes, that if some spoiler
 came
 Fresh from his wickedness, and looked
 on them,
 Their glare would strike him dead; and
 those fair curls
 Which once the accursed toyed with,
 grew to be

The poisonous things thou seest ; and
so, with hate
Of man's injustice and the gods', who
knew
Me blameless, and yet punished me ;
and sick
Of life and love, and loathing earth
and sky,
And feeding on my sorrow, I hate at last
Left me a Fury.

Ah, the load of life
Which lives for hatred ! We are made
to love—
We women, and the injury which turns
The honey of our lives to gall, trans-
forms
The angel to the fiend. For it is
sweet
To know the dreadful sense of strength,
and smite
And leave the tyrant dead with a
glance ; ay ! sweet,
In that fierce lust of power, to slay the
life
Which harmed not, when the sup-
pliants' cry ascends
To ears which hate has deafened. So
I lived
Long time in misery ; to my sleepless
eyes
No healing slumbers coming ; but at
length,
Zeus and the goddess pitying, I knew
Soft rest once more veiling my dreadful
gaze
In peaceful slumbers. Then a blessed
dream
I dreamt. For, lo ! a god-like knight
in mail
Of gold, who sheared with his keen
flashing blade ;
With scarce a pang of pain, the visage
gold

Which too great sorrow left me ; at one
stroke
Clean from the trunk, and then o'er
land and sea,
Invisible, sped with winged heels, to
where,
Upon a sea worn cape, a fair young
maid,
More blameless even than I was,
chained and bound,
Waited a monster from the deep and
stood
In innocent nakedness. Then, as he
rose,
Loathsome, from out the depths, a
monstrous growth,
A creature wholly serpent, partly man,
The wrongs that I had known, stronger
than death,
Rose up with such black hate in me
again,
And wreathed such hissing poison
through my hair,
And shot such deadly glances from my
eyes,
That nought that saw might live. And
the vile worm
Was slain, and she delivered. Then I
dreamt
My mistress, whom I thought so stern
to me,
Athené, set those dreadful staring eyes,
And that despairing visage, on her shield
Of chastity, and bears it evermore
To fright the waverer from the wrong
he would,
And strike the unrepenting spoiler,
dead."

Then for a little paused she, while I
saw
Again her eyes grow dreadful, till
once more,

And with a softer glance :
 " From that blest dream
I woke not on the earth, but only here.
And now my pain is lightened since I
 know
My dream, which was a dream within
 the dream
Which is our life, fulfilled. And I have
 saved
Another through my suffering, and
 through her
A people. Oh, strange chain of sacri-
 fice,
That binds an innocent life, and from
 its blood
And sorrow works out joy ! Oh,
 mystery
Of pain and evil ! wrong grown salu-
 tary,
And mighty to redeem ! If thou
 shouldst see
A woman on the earth, who pays to-
 day
Like penalty of sin, and the new gods
(For after Saturn, Zeus ruled ; after
 him
It may be there are others) love to take
The tender heart of girlhood, and to
 immure
Within a cold and cloistered cell the
 life
Which nature meant to bless, and if
 Love come
Hold her accursed ; or to some poor
 maid,
Forlorn and trusting, still the tempter
 comes
And works his wrong, and leaves her
 in despair
And shame and all abhorrence, while
 he goes
His way unpunished,—if thou know
 her eyes

Freeze thee like mine—oh ! bid her
lose her pain
In succouring others—say to her that
Time
And Death have healing hands, and
here there comes
To the forgiven transgressor only pain
Enough to chasten joy !”
And a soft tear
Trembled within her eyes, and her
sweet gaze
Was as the Magdalen’s, the horror
gone
And a great radiance come.

Then as I passed

To upper air, I saw two figures rise
Together, one a woman with a grave
Fair face not all unhappy, and the
robes
And presence of a queen ; and with
her walked
The fairest youth that ever maiden’s
dream .
Conceived. And as they came, the
throng of ghosts,
For these who were not wholly ghosts,
arose,
And did them homage. Not the bond
of love
Bound them, but such calm kinship as
is bred
Of long and difficult pilgrimages borne
Through common perils by two souls
which share
A common weary exile. Nor as ghosts
These showed, but rather like two lives
which hung
Suspended in a trance. A halo of
life

Played round them, and they brought
a sweet brisk air
Tasting of earth and heaven, like
sojourners
Who stayed but for awhile, and knew
a swift
Release await them. First the youth
it was
Who spake thus as they passed :

"Dread Queen, once more
I feel life stir within me, and my blood
Run faster, while a new strange cycle
turns
And grows completed. Soon on the
dear earth,
Under the lively light of fuller day,
I shall revive me of my wound ; and
thou,
Passing with me yon cold and lifeless
stream,
And the grim monster who will fawn
on thee,
Shalt issue in royal pomp, and wreathed
with flowers,
Upon the cheerful earth, leaving behind
A deeper winter for the ghosts who
dwell
Within these sunless haunts ; and I
shall lie
Once more within loved arms, and thou
shalt see
Thy early home, and kiss thy mother's
check,
And be a girl again. But not for long ;
For ere the bounteous Autumn spreads
her hues
Of gold and purple, a cold voice will
call
And bring us to these wintry lands once
more,
As erst so often. Blest are we, indeed,
Above the rest, and yet I would I knew
The careless joys of old.

For in hot youth,
Oh, it was sweet to greet the balmy
night
That was love's nurse, and feel the
weary eyes
Closed by soft kisses,—sweet at early
dawn
To wake refreshed and, scarce from
loving arms
'Scaping, to ride afield, with winding
horn,
By dewy heath and brake, and taste
the fair
Young breath of early morning ; and
'twas sweet
To chase the bounding quarry all day
long
With my good hounds and trusty steed,
and gay
Young comrades of my youth, and with
the eve
To turn home laden with the spoil, and
take
The banquet which awaited, and sweet
wine
Poured out, and kisses pressed on
loving lips ;
Circled by snowy arms. Oh, it was
sweet
To be alive and young !

For sure it is
The gods gave not quick pulses and
hot blood
And strength and beauty for no end,
but would
That we should use them wisely ; and
the fair,
Sweet mistress of my service was,
indeed,
Worthy of all observance. Oh, her
eyes
When I lay bleeding ! All day long
we rode,

I and my youthful peers, with horse
and hound,
And knew the joy of swift pursuit and
toil
And peril. At the last, a fierce boar
turned
At bay, and with his gleaming tusks
o'erthrew
My steed, and as I fell upon the
flowers,
Pierced me as with a sword. Then,
as I lay,
I knew the strange slow chill which,
stealing, tells
The young that it is death. Yet knew
I not
Or pain or fear, only great pity, indeed,
That she should lose her love, who was
so fond
And gracious. But when, lifting my
dim gaze,
I saw her bend o'er me,—the lovely
eyes
Suffused with tears, and her sweet
smile replaced
By sweeter sorrow,—for a while I
stayed
Life's ebbing tide, and raised my cold,
white lips,
With a faint smile, to hers. Then,
with a kiss—
One long last kiss, we mingled, and I
knew
No more.
But even in death, so strong is Love,
I could not wholly die; and year by
year,
When the flowered Spring returns, and
the earth lives,
Love opens these dread gates, and calls
me forth
Across the gulf. Not here, indeed, she
comes,

Being a goddess and in heaven, but
smooths
My path to the old earth, where still I
know
Once more the dear lost days, and once
again
Blossom on that soft breast, and am
again
A youth, and rapt in love; and yet
not all
As careless as of yore; but seem to
know
The early spring of passion, tamed by
time
And suffering, to a calmer, fuller flow,
Less fitful, but more strong."

Then the sad Queen:
" Fair youth, thy lot I know, for I am
old
As the old earth and yet as young
as is
The budding spring, and I was here a
Queen,
When Love was not or Time, and to
my arms
Thou camest as a little child, to dwell
Within the halls of Death, for without
Death
There were nor Birth nor Love, nor
would Life yearn
To lose itself within another life,
And dying, to be born. I, too, have
died
For love in part, and live again through
love;
For in the far-off years, when Time
was young,
And Love unborn on earth, and Zeus
in heaven
Ruled, a young sovereign; I, a maiden,
dwelt
With loved Demeter on the sunny
plains

Of our own Sicily. There, day by day,
I sported with my playmate goddesses,
In virgin freedom. Budding age made
 gay
Our lightsome feet, and on the flowery
 slopes
We wandered daily, gathering flowers
 to weave
In careless garlands for our locks, and
 passed
The days in innocent gladness. Thought
 of Love
There came not to us, for as yet the
 earth
Was virginal, nor yet had Eros come
With his delicious pain.

And one fair morn—
Not all the ages blot it—on the side
Of Aetna we were straying. There was
 then
Summer nor winter, springtide nor the
 time
Of harvest, but the soft unsailing sun
Shone always, and the sowing time was
 one
With reaping; fruit and flower together
 glowed
Upon the trees; and blade and ripened
 ear
Together clothed the plains. There,
 as I strayed,
Sudden a black cloud down the rugged
 side
Of Aetna, mixed with fire and dreadful
 sound
Of thunder, rolled around me, and I
 heard
The maids who were my fellows turn
 and flee
With shrieks and cries for me.

But I, I knew
No terror while the god o'ershadowed
 me,

Hiding my life in his, nor when I wept,
My flowers all withered, and my blood
 ran slow
Within a wintry land. Some voice
 there was
Which said, 'Fear not. Thou shalt
 return and see
Thy mother again, only a little while
Fate wills that thou shouldst tarry, and
 become
Queen of another world. Thou seest
 that all
Thy flowers are faded. They shall live
 again
On earth, as thou shalt, as thou livest
 now
The Life of Death—for what is Death
 but Life
Suspended as in sleep? The primal
 rule
Where life was constant, and the sun
 o'erhead,
Blazed forth unchanging, changes and
 is hidden
Awhile. This region which thou seest,
 where all
The trees are lifeless, and the flowers
 are dead,
Is but the self-same earth on which
 crewhile
Thou sportedst fancy free.'

So, without fear
I wandered on this bare land, seeing far
Upon the sky the peaks of my own hills
And crests of my own woods. Till,
 when I grew
Hungrier, ere yet another form I saw;
Along the silent alleys journeying,
And leafless groves; a fair and mystic
 tree
Rose like a heart in shape, and 'mid its
 leaves
One golden mystic fruit with a fair seed

Hid in it. This, with childish hand, I took
And ate, and straight I knew the tree
was Life,
And the fruit Death, and the hid seed
was Love.

Ah, sweet strange fruit ! the which
if any taste
They may no longer keep their lives of
old
Or their own selves unchanged, but
some weird change
And subtle alchemy comes which can
transmute
The blood, and mould the spirits of
gods and men
In some new magical form. Not as
before,
Our life comes to us, though the passion
cools,
Nay, never as before. My mother
came
Too late to seek me. She had power
to raise
A life from out Death's grasp, but from
the arms
Of Love she might not take me, nor
undo
Love's past for all her strength. She
came and sought
With fires her daughter over land and
sea,
Beyond the paths of all the setting stars,
In vain, and over all the earth in vain,
Seeking whom love disguised. Then
on all lands
She cast the spell of barrenness ; the
wheat
Was blighted in the ear, the purple
grapes
Blushed no more on the vines, and all
the gods

Were sorrowful, seeing the load of ill
My rape had laid on men. Last, Zeus
himself,
Pitying the evil that was done, sent forth
His messenger beyond the western rim
To fetch me back to earth.

But not the same
He found me who had eaten of Love's
seed,
But changed into another ; nor could
his power
Prevail to keep me wholly on the earth,
Or make me maid again. The wintry
life
Is homelier often than the summer blaze
Of happiness unclouded ; so, when
Spring
Comes on the world, I, coming, cross
with thee,
Year after year, the cruel icy stream ;
And leave this anxious, sceptic and the
shades
Of those in hell, or those for whom,
though blest,
No Spring comes, till the last great
Spring which brings
New heavens and new earth ; and lay
my head
Upon my mother's bosom, and grow
young,
And am a girl again.
A soft air breathes
Across the stream and fills these barren
fields
With the sweet odours of the earth. I
know
Again the perfume of the violets
Which bloom on Aetna's side. Soon
we shall pass
Together to our home, while round our
feet
The crocus flames like gold, the wind-
flowers white

Wave their soft petals on the breeze,
and all
The choir of flowers lift up their silent
song
To the unclouded heavens. Thou, fair
boy,
Shalt lie within thy love's white arms
again,
And I within my mother's. Sweet is Love
In ceasing and renewal ; nay, in these
It lives and has its being. Thou couldst
not keep
Thy youth as now, if always on the
breast
Of love too late a lingerer thou hadst
known
Possession sate thee. Nor might I have
kept
My mother's heart, if I had lived to ripe
And wither on the stalk. Time calls
and Change
Commands both men and gods, and
speds us on
We know not whither ; but the old
earth smiles
Spring after Spring, and the seed bursts
again
Out of its prison mould, and the dead
lives
Renew themselves, and rise aloft and
soar
And are transformed, clothing them-
selves with change
Till the last change be done."

As thus she spake,

I saw a gleam of light flash from the eyes
Of all the listening shades, and a great
joy
Thrill through the realms of Death.

And then again
A youthful shade I saw, a comely boy,
With lip and cheek just touched with
manly down,
And strong limbs wearing Spring ; in
mien and garb
A youthful chieftain, with a perfect face
Of fresh young beauty, clustered curls
divine,
And chiselled features like a sculptured
god,
But warm and breathing life ; only the
eyes,
The fair large eyes, were full of dream-
ing thought,
And seemed to gaze beyond the world
of sight,
On a hid world of beauty. Him I
stayed,
Accosting with soft words of courtesy ;
And, on a bank of scentless flowers
reclined,
He answered thus :
" Not for the garish sun
I long, nor for the splendours of high
noon
In this dim land I languish ; for of
yore
Full often, when the swift chase swept
along
Through the brisk morn, or when my
comrades called
To wrestling, or the foot-race, or to
cleave
The sunny stream, I loved to walk
apart,
Self-centred, sole ; and when the
laughing girls
To some fair stripling's oaten melody
Made ready for the dance, I heeded
not ;
Nor when to the loud trumpet's blast
and blare

My peers rode forth to battle. For,
one eve,
In Latmos, after a long day in June,
I stayed to rest me on a sylvan hill,
Where often youth and maid were wont
- to meet
Toward moonrise ; and deep slumber
fell on me
Musing on Love, just as the ruddy orb
Rose on the lucid night, set in a frame
Of blooming myrtle and sharp tremulous
plane ;
Deep slumber fell, and loosed my limbs
in rest.

Then, as the full orb poised upon the
peak,
There came a lovely vision of a maid,
Who seemed to step as from a silvery
skiff
Out of the low-hung moon. No mortal
form,
Such as ofttimes of yore I knew and
clasped
At twilight 'mid the vines at the mad
feast
Of Dionysus, or the fair maids cold
Who streamed in white processions to
the shrine
Of the chaste Virgin Goddess ; but a
shape
Richer and yet more pure. No thinnest
veil
Obscured her ; but each exquisite limb
revealed,
She seemed an ivory statue subtly
wrought
By a great sculptor on the architrave
Of some high temple-front—only in her
The form was soft and loving, breath-
ing life,
And tender. As I seemed to gaze on
her,

Nearer she drew and gazed ; and as I
lay
Supine, beneath her spell, the radiance
stooped
And kissed me on the lips, a chaste,
sweet kiss,
Which drew my spirit with it. So I
slept
Each night upon the hill, until the
Dawn
Came in his golden chariot from the East,
And chased my Love away. But ever
thus
Dissolved in love as in a heaven-sent
dream,
Whenever the bright circle of the moon
Climbed from the hills, whether in leafy
June
Or harvest-tide, or when they leapt and
pressed
Red-thighed the spouting must, I
walked apart
From all, and took no thought for
mortal maid,
Nor nimble joys of youth ; but night
by night
I stole, when all were sleeping, to the
hill,
And slumbered and was blest ; until I
grew
Posset by love so deep, I seemed to
live
In slumbers only, while the waking day
Showed faint as any vision.
So I grew
Paler and feebler with the months, and
climbed
The steep with laboured steps and
difficult breath,
But still I climbed. Ay, though the
wintry frost
Chained fast the streams and whitened
all the fields,

I sought my mistress through the leafless groves,
And slumbered and was happy, till the dawn
Returning found me stretched out, cold and stark,
With life's fire nigh burnt out. Till one clear night,
When the birds shivered in the pines, and all
The inner heavens stood open, lo ! she came,
Brighter and kinder still, and kissed my eyes
And half-closed lips, and drew my soul through them,
And in one precious ecstasy dissolved My life. And thenceforth, ever on the hill
I lie unseen of man ; a cold, white form, Still young, through all the ages ; but my soul,
Wearing this thin presentment of old days,
Walks this dim land, where never moonrise comes,
Nor day-break, but a twilight waiting-time,
No more ; and, ah ! how weary ! Yet I judge
My lot a higher far than his who spends His youth on swift hot pleasure, quickly past ;
Or theirs, my equals', who through long calm years
Grew sleek in dull content of wedded lives
And fair-grown offspring. Many a day for them,
While I was wandering here, and my bones bleached
Upon the rocks, the sweet autumnal sun

Beamed, and the grapes grew purple.
Many a day They heaped up gold, they knelt at festivals,
They waxed in high report and fame of men,
They gave their girls in marriage ; while for me Upon the untrodden peaks, the cold, grey morn,
The snows, the rains, the winds, the untempered blaze, Beat year by year, until I turned to stone,
And the great eagles shrieked at me, and wheeled Affrighted. Yet I judge it better indeed To seek in life, as now I know I sought, Some fair impossible Love, which slays our life,
Some fair ideal raised too high for man ; And failing to grow mad, and cease to be,
Than to decline, as they do who have found Broad-paunched content and weal and happiness : And so an end. For one day, as I know, The high aim unfulfilled fulfils itself ; The deep, unsatisfied thirst is satisfied ; And through this twilight, broken suddenly, The inmost heaven, the lucent stars of God,
The Moon of Love, the Sun of Life ; and I, I who pine here—I on the Latmian hill Shall soar aloft and find them."

With the word, There beamed a shaft of dawn athwart the skies,

And straight the sentinel thrush within
the yew
Sang out reveillé to the hosts of day,
Soldierly ; and the pomp and rush of life
Began once more, and left me there
alone
Amid the awaking world.

Nay, not alone.
One fair shade lingered in the fuller day,
The last to come, when now my dream
had grown
Half mixed with waking thoughts, as
grows a dream
In summer mornings when the broader
light
Dazzles the sleeper's eyes ; and is most
fair
Of all and best remembered, and
becomes
Part of our waking life, when older
dreams
Grow fainter, and are fled. So this
remained
The fairest of the visions that I knew,
Most precious and most dear.

The increasing light
Shone through her, finer than the
thinnest shade,
And yet most full of beauty ; golden
wings,
From her fair shoulders springing,
seemed to raise
Her stainless feet from the gross earth
and lift
Their wearer into air ; and in her eyes
Was such fair glance as comes from
virgin love,
Long chastened and triumphant.
Every soul

Of life had vanished from her, and
she showed
As one who walks a saint already on
earth,
Virgin or mother. Immortality
Breathed from those radiant eyes which
yet had passed
Between the gates of death. I seemed
to hear
The Soul of mortals speaking :
“ I was born
Of a great race and mighty, and was
grown
Fair, as they said, and good, and kept
a life
Pure from all stain of passion. Love
I knew not,
Who was absorbed in duty ; and the
Queen
Of gods and men, seeing my life more
calm
Than human, hating my impassive heart,
Sent down her perfect son in wrath to
earth,
And bade him break me.
But when Eros came,
It did repent him of the task, for Love
Is kin to Duty.”
And within my life
I knew miraculous change, and a soft
flame
Wherefrom the snows of Duty flushed
to rose,
And the chill icy depths of mind were
stirred
By a warm tide of passion. Long I
lived
Not knowing what had been, nor re-
cognized
A Presence walking with me through
my life,
As if by night, his face and form con-
cealed :

A gracious voice alone, which none
but I
Might hear, sustained me, and its name
was Love.

Not as the earthly loves which throb
and flush
Round earthly shrines was mine, but
a pure spirit,
Lovelier than all embodied love, more
pure
And wonderful; but never on his eyes
I looked, which still were hidden, and
I knew not
The fashion of his nature; for by night,
When visual eyes are blind, but the
soul sees,
Came he, and bade me think not to
make search
Or whence he came or wherefore.
Nor knew I
His name. And always ere the coming
day,
As if he were the Sun-god, lingering
With some too well-loved maiden, he
would rise
And vanish until eve. But all my being
Thrilled with my fair unearthly visitant
To higher duty and more glorious need
Of action than of old, for it was Love
That came to me, who might not know
his name.

Thus, ever rapt by dreams divine,
I knew
The scorn that comes from weaker
souls, which miss,
Being too low of nature, the great joy
Revealed to others higher; nay, my
sisters,
Who being of one blood with me, made
choice
To tread the flowery ways of daily life,

Grew jealous of me, bidding me take
heed
Lest haply 'twas some monstrous fiend
I loved,
Such as in fable oftentimes sought and won
The innocent hearts of maids. Long
time I held
My love too dear for doubt, who was
so sweet
And lovable. But at the last the sneers,
The mystery which hid him, the swift
flight
Before the coming dawn, the shape
concealed,
The curious girlish heart, these worked
on me
With an unsatisfied thirst. Not his
own words:
'Dear, I am with thee only while I keep
My visage hidden; and if thou once
shouldst see
My face, I must forsake thee: the
high gods
Link Love with Faith, and he with-
draws himself
From the full gaze of Knowledge'—
not even these
Could cure me of my longing, or the fear
Those mocking voices worked: who
fain would learn
The worst that might befall.

And one sad night,
Just ere the day leapt from the hills
and brought
The hour when he should go: with
tremulous hands,
Lighting my midnight lamp in fear, I
stood
Long time uncertain, and at length
turned round
And gazed upon my love. He lay asleep,
And oh, how fair he was! The flicker-
ing light

Fell on the fairest of the gods, stretched
out
In happy slumber. Looking on his
locks
Of gold, and faultless face and smile,
and limbs
Made perfect, a great joy and trembling
took me
Who was most blest of women, and in
awe
And fear I stooped to kiss him. One
warm drop—
From the full lamp within my trembling
hand,
Or a glad tear from my too happy eyes,
Fell on his shoulder.

Then the god unclosed
His lovely eyes, and with great pity
spake :
' Farewell ! There is no Love except
with Faith,
And thine is dead ! Farewell ! I
come no more.'
And straightway from the hills the full
red sun
Leapt up, and as I clasped my love
again,
The lovely vision faded from his place,
And came no more.

Then I, with breaking heart,
Knowing my life laid waste by my own
hand,
Went forth and would have sought to
hide my life
Within the stream of Death; but Death
came not
To aid me who not yet was meet for
Death.

Then finding that Love came not
back to me,
I thought that in the temples of the gods
Haply he dwelt, and so from fane to fane

I wandered over earth, and knelt in each,
Enquiring for my Love; and I would ask
The priests and worshippers, ' Is this
Love's shrine ?
Sirs, have you seen the god ? ' But
never at all
I found him. For some answered,
' This is called
The Shrine of Knowledge ; ' and another, ' This,
The Shrine of Beauty ; ' and another,
' Strength ; '
And yet another, ' Youth.' And I
would kneel
And say a prayer to my Love, and rise
And seek another. Long, o'er land
and sea,
I wandered, till I was not young or fair,
Grown wretched, seeking my lost Love;
and last,
Came to the smiling, hateful shrine
where ruled
The queen of earthly love and all
delight,
Cypri, but knelt not there, but asked
of one
Who seemed her priest, if Eros dwelt
with her.

Then to the subtle-smiling goddess'
self
They led me. She with hatred in her
eyes :
' What ! thou to seek for Love, who
art grown thin
And pale with watching ! He is not
for thee.
What Love is left for such ? Thou
didst despise
Love, and didst dwell apart. Love
sits within
The young maid's eyes, making them
beautiful.

Love is for youth, and joy, and happiness;
And not for withered lives. Ho ! bind her fast.
Take her and set her to the vilest tasks,
And bend her pride by solitude and tears,
Who will not kneel to me, but dares to seek
A disembodied love. My son has gone
And left thee for thy fault, and thou shalt know
The misery of my thralls.

Then in her house
They bound me to hard tasks and vile,
and kept
My life from honour, chained among
her slaves
And lowest ministers, taking despite
And injury for food, and set to bind
Their wounds whom she had tortured,
and to feed
The pitiful lives which in her prisons
pent
Languished in hopeless pain. There is no sight
Of suffering but I saw it, and was set
To succour it ; and all my woman's
heart
Was torn with the ineffable miseries
Which love and life have worked ; and
dwelt long time
In groanings and in tears.

And then, oh joy !
Oh miracle ! once more again at length
I felt Love's arms around me, and the kiss
Of Love upon my lips, and in the chill
Of deepest prison cells, 'mid vilest tasks,
The glow of his sweet breath, and the warm touch
Of his invisible hand, and his sweet voice,

Ay, sweeter than of old, and tenderer,
Speak to me, pierce me, hold me, fold me round
With arms Divine, till all the sordid earth
Was hued like heaven, and Life's dull prison-house
Turned to a golden palace, and those low tasks
Grew to be higher works and nobler gains
Than any gains of knowledge, and at last
He whispered softly, 'Dear, unclose thine eyes,
Thou mayst look on me now. I go no more,
But am thine own for ever.'

Then with wings
Of gold we soared, I looking in his eyes,
Over yon dark broad river, and this dim land,
Scarce for an instant staying till we reached
The inmost courts of heaven.

But sometimes still
I come here for a little, and speak a word
Of peace to those who wait. The slow wheel turns,
The cycles round themselves and grow complete,
The world's year whitens to the harvest-tide,
And one word only am I sent to say
To those dear souls, who wait here, or
who now
Breathe earthly air — one universal word
To all things living, and the word is
'Love.''

Then soared she visibly before my gaze,
And the heavens took her, and I knew my eyes
Had seen the Soul of man, the deathless Soul,
Defeated, struggling, purified, and blest.

Then all the choir of happy waiting shades,
Heroes and queens, fair maidens and brave youths,
Swept by me, rhythmic, slow, as if they trod

Some unheard measure, passing where I stood
In fair procession, each with a faint smile
Upon the lip, signing "Farewell, oh shade !
It shall be well with thee, as 'tis with us,
If only thou art true. The world of Life,
The world of Death, are but opposing sides
Of one great orb, and the Light shines on both.
Oh, happy, happy shade ! Farewell !
Farewell !"
And so they passed away.

BOOK III.

OLYMPUS.

BUT I, my gaze following the soaring soul which now was lost
In the awakening skies, floated with her,
As in a trance, beyond the golden gates
Which separate Earth from Heaven ; and to my thought,
Gladdened by that broad effluence of light,
This old earth seemed transfigured, and the fields,
So dim and bare, grew green and clothed themselves
With lustrous hues. A fine ethereal air Played round me as I mused, and filled the soul
With an ineffable content. What help In words to tell of things unreach'd by words ?
Or how to engrave upon the treacherous thought

The fair and fugitive fancies of a dream,
Which vanish ere we fix them ? But methinks He knows the scene, who knows the one fair day,
One only and no more, which year by year In springtime comes, when lingering winter flies,
And lo ! the bare boughs prankt with white and pink,
And golden clusters, and the green glades starred With delicate primrose and deep odorous beds
Of violets, and on the tufted meads With kingcups lit, and cowslip bells, and blue Sweet hyacinths, and frail anemones,
The broad West wind breathes softly, and the air

Is tremulous with the lark, and thro'
the woods
The soft full-throated thrushes all day
long
Flood the green dells with joy, and
thro' the dry
Brown fields the sower strides, sowing
his seed,
And all is life and song. Or he who
first,
Whether in fair free boyhood, when the
world
Is his to choose, or when his fuller life
Beats to another life, or afterwards,
Keeping his youth within his children's
eyes,
Looks on the snow-clad everlasting
hills,
And marks the sunset smite them, and
is glad
Of the beautiful fair world.
A springtide land
It seemed, where East winds came not.
• Sweetest song
Was everywhere, by glade or sunny
plain;
And thro' the golden valleys winding
streams
Rippled in glancing silver, and above,
The blue hills rose, and over all a peak,
White, awful, with a constant fleece of
cloud
Veiling its summit, towered. Unfailing
Day
Lighted it, for no turn of dawn and eve
Came there, nor changing seasons, but
a broad
Fixed joy of Being, undisturbed by
Time.

There, in a happy glade shut in by
groves
Of laurel and sweet myrtle, on a green

And flower-lit lawn, I seemed to see
the ghosts
Of the old gods. Upon the gentle slope
Of a fair hill, a joyous company,
The Immortals lay. Hard by, a mur-
murous stream
Fell through the flowers ; below them,
space on space,
Laughed the immeasurable plains ;
beyond,
The mystic mountain soared. Height
after height
Of bare rock ledges left the climbing
pines,
And reared their giddy, shining terraces
Into the ethereal air. Above, the snows
Of the white summit cleft the fleece of
cloud
Which always clothed it round.
Ah, fair and sweet,
Yet with a ghostly fairness, fine and
thin,
Those godlike Presences. Not dreams
indeed,
But something dream-like, were they.
Blessed Shades
Heroic and Divine, as when, in days
When Man was young, and Time, the
vivid thought
Translated into Form the unattained
Impossible Beauty of men's dreams,
and fixed
The Loveliness in marble.
As with awe
Following my spotless guide, I stood
apart,
Not daring to draw near ; a shining form
Rose from the throng, and floated,
light as air,
To where I trembled. And I knew
the face
And form of Artemis, the fair, the pure,
The undefiled. A crescent silvery moon

Shone thro' her locks, and by her side
she bore
A quiver of golden darts. At sight of
whom
I felt a sudden chill, like his who once
Looked upon her and died ; yet could
not fear,
Seeing how fair she was. Her sweet
voice rang
Clear as a bird's :
“ Mortal, what fate hath brought
Thee hither, uncleanseⁿd by death ?
How canst thou breathe
Immortal air, being mortal ! Yet fear
not,
Since thou art come. For we too are
of earth
Whom here thou seest : there were not
a heaven
Were there no earth, nor gods, had men
not been,
But each the complement of each and
grown
The other's creature, is and has its being,
A double essence, Human and Divine.
So that the God is hidden in the man,
And something Human bounds and
forms the God ;
Which else had shown too great and
undefined
For mortal sight, and having no human
eye
To see it, were unknown. But we who
bore
Sway of old time, we were but attributes
* Of the great God who is all Things
that be—
The Pillar of the Earth and starry Sky,
The Depth of the great Deep ; the Sun,
the Moon,
The Word which Makes ; the All-
compelling Love—

* See the *Orphic Hymns*.

For all Things lie within His Infinite
Form.”
Even as she spake, a throng of shapes
divine
Floated around me, filling all my soul
With fair unearthly beauty, and the air
With such ambrosial perfume as is born,
When morning breathes upon a tropic
sea,
From boundless wastes of flowers ; and
as I knelt
In rapture, lo ! the same clear voice
again
From out the throng of gods :
“ Those whom thou seest
Were even as I, embodiments of Him
Who is the Centre of all Life : myself
The Maiden-Queen of Purity ; and
Strength,
Divine when unabused ; Love too, the
Spring
And Cause of Things ; and Knowledge,
which lays bare
Their secret ; and calm Duty, Queen
of all,
And Motherhood, in one ; and Youth,
which bears,
Beauty of Form and Life and Light,
and breathes
The breath of Inspiration ; and the Soul,
The particle of God, sent down to man,
Which doth in turn reveal the world
and God.
Wherefore it is men called on
Artemis,
The refuge of young souls ; for still in
age
They keep some dim reflection uneffaced
Of a Diviner Purity than comes
To the spring days of youth, when all
the world

Smiles, and the rapid blood thro' the
 young veins
 Courses, and all is glad ; yet knowing
 too
 That innocence is young—before the soil
 And smirch of sadder knowledge,
 settling on it,
 Sully its primal whiteness. So they
 knelt
 At my white shrines, the eager boyish
 souls,
 To whom life's road showed like a dewy
 field
 In early summer dawns, when to the
 sound
 Of youth's clear voice, and to the
 cheerful rush
 Of the tumultuous feet and clamorous
 tongues.
 Careering onwards, fair and dappled
 fawns,
 Strange birds with jewelled plumes,
 fierce spotted pards,
 Rise in the joyous chase, to be caught
 and slain
 By the young conqueror ; nor yet the
 charm
 Of sensual ease allures. And they knelt
 too,
 The pure sweet maidens fair and fancy-
 free,
 Whose innocent virgin hearts shrank
 from the touch
 Of passion as from wrong—sweet moon-
 lit lies
 Which fade, and pale, and vanish, in
 the glare
 Of Love's hot noon tide : these came
 robed in white,
 With holy hymns and soaring liturgies :
 And so men fabled me, a huntress now,
 Borne thro' the flying woodlands, fair
 and free ; .

And now the pale cold Moon, Light
 without warmth,
 Zeal without touch of passion, heavenly
 love
 For human, and the altar for the home.
 But oh, how sweet it was to take the
 love
 And awe of my young worshippers ; to
 watch
 The pure young gaze and hear the pure
 young voice
 Mount in the hymn, or see the gay
 troop come
 With the first dawn of day, brushing
 the dew
 From the unpolluted fields, and wake
 to song
 The slumbering birds ; strong in their
 innocence !
 I did not envy any goddess of all
 The Olympian company her votaries !
 Ah, happy days of old which now are
 gone !
 A memory and a dream ! for now on
 earth
 I rule no longer o'er young willing
 hearts
 In voluntary fealty, which would cease
 When Love, with fiery accents calling,
 woke
 The slumbering soul ; as now it should
 for those
 Who kneel before the purer, sadder
 shrine
 Which has replaced my own. But ah !
 too oft,
 Not always, but too often, shut from
 life
 Within pale life-long cloisters and the
 bars
 Of hopeless convent prisons, year by
 year,

Age after age, the white souls fade and pine
 Which simulate the joyous service free
 Of those young worshippers. I would that I
 Might loose the captives' chain; or Herakles,
 Who was a mortal once."

But he who stood
 Colossal at my side: "I toil no more
 On earth, nor wield again the mighty strength
 Which Zeus once gave me for the cure of ill.
 I have run my race; I have done my work; I rest
 For ever from the toilsome days I gave
 To the suffering race of men. And yet, indeed,
 Methinks they suffer still. Tyrannous growths
 And monstrous vex them still. Pestilence lurks
 And sweeps them down. Treacheries come, and wars,
 And slay them still. Vaulting ambition leaps
 And falls in bloodshed still. But I am here
 At rest, and no man kneels to me, or keeps
 Reverence for strength mighty yet un-abused—
 Strength which is Power, God's choicest gift, more rare
 And precious than all Beauty, or the charm
 Of Wisdom, since it is the instrument

Thro' which all Nature works. For now the earth is full of meekness, and a new God rules, Teaching strange precepts of humility And mercy and forgiveness. Yet I trow There is no lack of bloodshed and deceit And groanings, and the tyrant works his wrong Even as of old; but now there is no arm Like mine, made strong by Zeus, to beat him down, Him and his wrong together. Yet I know I am not all disrowned. The strong brave souls, The manly tender hearts, whom tale of wrong To woman or child, to all weak things and small, Fires like a blow; kindling the righteous flush Of anger on the brow; knotting the cords Of muscle on the arm; with one desire To hew the spoiler down, and make an end, And go their way for others; making light Of toil and pain, and too laborious days, And peril; beat unchanged, albeit they serve A Lord of meekness. For the world still needs Its champion as of old, and finds him still. Not always now with mighty sinews and thews Like mine, though still these profit, but keen brain

And voice to move men's souls to love But bearing, as it seemed, some faintest
the right trace
And hate the wrong; even tho' the Of earthly struggle still, not the gay
bodily form ease
Be weak, of giant strength, strong to Of the elder heaven-born gods.
assail

The hydra heads of Evil, and to slay And then there came
The monsters that now waste them : Beauty and Joy in one, bearing the form
Ignorance,
Self-seeking, coward fears, the hate of Of woman. How to reach with halting
Man, words
Disguised as love of God. These That infinite Perfection? All have
labour still known
With toil as hard as mine. For what The breathing marbles which the Greek
was it has left
To strive with bodily ills, and do great Who saw her near, and strove to fix her
deeds charms,
Of daring and of strength, and bear the And exquisitely failed ; or those fair
crown, forms
To his high task who wages lifelong The Painter offered at a later shrine,
strife And failed. Nay, what are words?—
With an impalpable foe ; conquering he knows it well
indeed, Who loves, or who has loved.
But, ere he hears the pæan or sees the She with a smile
pomp Playing around her rosy lips ; as plays
Laid low in the arms of Death? And The sunbeam on a stream :
tho' men cease " Shall I complain
To worship at my shrine, yet not the Men kneel to me no longer, taking to
less them
It is the toils I knew, the pains I bore Some graver, sterner worship ; grown
For others, which have kept the steadfast heart
fast heart
Of manhood undefiled, and nerved the For fleeting joys of Love? Nay, Love
arm is Youth,
Of sacrifice, and made the martyr strong And still the world is young. Still
To do and bear, and taught the race of shall I reign
men Within the hearts of men, while Time
How godlike 'tis to suffer thro' life, and shall last
die
At last for others' good!" And Life renews itself. All Life that
The strong god ceased, is,
And stood a little, musing ; blest indeed, From the weak things of earth or sea
or air,

Which creep or float for an hour ; to
godlike man—
All know me and are mine. I am the
source
And mother of all, both gods and men ;
the spring
Of Force and Joy, which, penetrating
all
Within the hidden depths of the Un-
known,
Sets the blind germ of Being, and from
the bond
Of incomplete and dual Essences
Evolves the harmony which is Life.
The world
Were dead without my rays, who am
the Light
Which vivifies the world. Nay, but for
me,
The universal order which attracts
Sphere unto sphere, and keeps them in
their paths
For ever, were no more. All things
are bound
Within my golden chain, whose name
is Love.

And if there be, indeed, some sterner
souls
Or sunk in too much learning, or
hedged round
By care and greed, or haply too much
rapt
By pale ascetic fervours, to delight
To kneel to me, the universal voice
Scorns them as those who, spurning
wilfully
The good that Nature offers, dwell un-
blest
Who might be blest, but would not.
Every voice
Of bard in every age has hymned me.
All

The breathing marbles, all the glowing
hues
Of painting, praise me. Even the love-
less shades
Of dim monastic cloisters show some
gleam,
Tho' saint, of me. Amid the busy
throng
Of cities reign I, and o'er lonely
plains,
Beyond the ice-fields of the frozen
North
And the warm waves of undiscovered
seas.

For I was born out of the sparkling
foam
Which lights the crest of the blue mystic
wave,
Stirred by the wandering breath of Life's
pure dawn
From a young soul's clear depths.
There, without voice,
Stretched on the breathing curve of a
young breast,
Fluttering a little, flesh from the great
deep
Of life, and creamy as the opening rose,
Naked I lie, naked yet unashamed,
While youth's warm tide steals round
me with a kiss,
And floods each limb with fairness.
Shame I know not—
Shame is for wrong, and not for inno-
cence—
The veil which Error grasps to hide
itself
From the awful Eye. But I, I lie un-
veiled
And unashamed—the livelong day I
lie,
The warm wave murmuring to me ; and,
all night,

Hidden in the moonlit caves of happy Sleep,
 I dream until the morning and am glad.

 Why should I seek to clothe myself, and hide
 The treasure of my Beauty? Shame may wait
 On those for whom 'twas given. The sties of sense
 Are none of mine; the brutish, loveless wrong,
 The venal charm, the simulated flush Of fleshly passion, they are none of mine,
 Only corruptions of me. Well I know
 The counterfeit the stronger, since gross souls
 And brutish sway the earth; yet not the less
 All sense is consecrated, and I deem 'Twere better to grow soft and sink in sense
 Than gloat o'er blood and wrong.

My kingdom is O'er infinite grades of life. Yet 'tis in man
 I find my worthiest worship. Where man is,
 A youth and a maid, a youth and a maid, nought else
 Is wanting for my temple. Every clime
 Kneels to me—the long breaker falls in foam
 Under the palms, swelling the merry noise
 Of savage bridals, and the straight brown limbs
 Know me, and over all the endless plains

I reign, and by the tents on the hot sand
 And sea-girt isles am queen, and by the sides
 Of silent mountains, where the white cots gleam
 Upon the green hill pastures, and no sound
 But the thunder of the avalanche is borne
 To the listening rocks around; and by fair lands
 Where all is peace; where thro' the happy hush
 Of tranquil summer evenings, 'mid the corn,
 Or thro' cool arches of the gadding vines,
 The lovers stray together hand in hand, Hymning my praise; and by the echoing streets
 Of stately cities—o'er the orb'd earth, The burning South, the icy North, the old
 And immemorial East, the unbounded West,
 No new god comes to spoil me utterly—All worship and are mine!

With a sweet smile

Upon her rosy mouth, the goddess ceased;
 And when she spake no more, the silence weighed
 As heavy on my soul as when it takes Some gracious melody, and leaves the ear
 Unsatisfied and longing, till the fount Of sweetness springs again.

But while I stood
Expectant, lo ! a fair pale form drew
 near
With front severe, and wide blue eyes
 which bore
Mild wisdom in their gaze. Clear
 purity
Shone from her—not the young-eyed
 innocence
Of her whom first I saw, but that which
 comes
From wider knowledge, which restrains
 the tide
Of passionate youth, and leads the
 musing soul
By the calm deeps of Wisdom. And
 I knew
My eyes had seen the fair, the virgin
 Queen,
Who once within her shining Parthenon
Beheld the sages kneel.

She with clear voice
And coldly sweet, yet with a softness
 too,
Such as befits a virgin :
 “ She doth right
To boast her sway, my sister, seeing
 indeed
That all things are as by a double law,
And from a double root the tree of
 Life
Springs up to the face of heaven. Body
 and Soul,
Matter and Spirit, lower joys of Sense
And higher joys of Thought, I know
 that both
Build up the shrine of Being. The
 brute sense
Leaves man a brute ; but, winged with
 soaring thought
Mounts to high heaven. The un-
 embodied spirit,
Dwelling alone, unanated, void of sense,

Shows impotent. And yet I know
 there is,
Far off, but not too far for mortal reach,
A calmer height, where, nearer to the
 stars,
Thought sits alone and gazes with rapt
 gaze,
A large-eyed maiden in a robe of white,
Who brings the light of Knowledge
 down, and draws
To her pontifical eyes a bridge of gold,
Which spans from earth to heaven.
For what were life,
If things of sense were all, for those
 large souls
And high, whom grudging Nature has
 shut fast
Within unlovely forms, or from whose
 life
The circuit of the rapid gliding years
Steals the brief gift of beauty ? Shall
 men hold
With idle singers, all the treasure of
 hope
Is lost with youth — swift-fleeting,
 treacherous youth,
Which fades and flies before the ripen-
 ing brain
Crowns life with Wisdom's crown ?
 Nay, even in youth,
Is it not more to tread the difficult
 heights
Alone—the cold free heights—and mark
 the vale
Lie breathless in the glare, or hidden
 and blurred
By cloud and storm ; or pestilence and
 war
Creep on with blood and death ; while
 the soul dwells
Apart upon the peaks, outfronts the sun
As the eagle does, or takes the coming
 dawn

While all the vale is dark, and knows
the springs
Oft tiny rivulets hurrying from the snows,
Which soon shall swell to vast resistless
floods,
And feed the Oceans which divide the
World?

Oh, ecstasy! oh, wonder! oh, delight!
Which neither the slow-withering wear
of Time,
That takes all else—the smooth and
rounded cheek
Of youth; the lightsome step; the
warm young heart
Which beats for love or friend; the
treasure of hope
Immeasurable; the quick-coursing
blood
Which makes it joy to be,—ay, takes
them all
Or makes them naught—nor yet saith
Born of too full possession, takes or
mars!
Oh, fair delight of learning! which
grows great
And stronger and more keen, for slower
limbs,
And dimmer eyes and loneliness, and
loss
Of lower good—wealth, friendship, ay,
and Love—
When the swift soul, turning its weary
gaze
From the old vanished joys, projects
itself
Into the void and floats in empty space,
Striving to reach the mystic source of
Things,
The secrets of the earth and sea and
air,
The Law that binds the process of the
sun,

The awful depths of Mind and Thought;
the prime
Unfathomable mystery of God!

Is there, then, any who holds my
worship cold
And lifeless? Nay, but 'tis the light
which cheers
The waning life! Love thou thy love,
brave youth!
Cleave to thy love, fair maid! it is the
Law
Which dominates the world, that bids
ye use
Your nature; but, when now the fuller
tide
Slackens a little, turn your calmer eyes
To the fair page of Knowledge. It is
power
I give, and power is precious. It is
strength
To live four-square, careless of outward
shows,
And self-sufficing. It is clearer sight
To know the rule of life, the Eternal
scheme;
And, knowing it, to do and not to err,
And, doing, to be blest."

The calm voice soared
Higher and higher to the close; the
cold'

Clear accents, fired as by a hidden fire,
Glowed into life and tenderness, and
throbbed
As with some spiritual ecstasy
Sweeter than that of Love.

But as they died,
I heard an ampler voice; and looking,
marked

A fair and gracious form. She seemed
a Queen
Who ruled o'er gods and men; the
majesty
Of perfect womanhood. No opening
bud
Of beauty, but the full consummate
flower
rs ; and from her mild large
yes looked forth
command, and motherhood, and
home,
And pure affection. Awe and reverence
O'erspread me, as I knew my eyes had
looked
On sovereign Heré, mother of the gods.

She, with clear, rounded utterance,
sweet and calm:
"I know the charm of stainless Innocence;
I know Love's fruit is good and fair
to see
And taste, if any gain it, and I know
How brief Youth's Passion-tide, which
when it ebbs
Leaves Life athirst for Knowledge, and
I know
How fair the realm of Mind, where
the keen soul
Yearning to rise, wings its impetuous
way
Beyond the bounds of Thought; and
yet there is
A higher bliss than theirs, which best
befits
A mortal life, compact of Body and Soul,
And therefore double-natured—a calm
path
Which lies before the feet, thro' common
ways
And undistinguished crowds of toiling
men,

And yet is hard to tread, tho' seeming
smooth,
And yet, tho' level, finds a worthier
crown.
For Knowledge is a steep which few
may climb,
While Duty is a path which all may tread.
And if the Goal of Life and Thought
be this,
How best to speed the mighty scheme,
which still
Fares onward day by day—the Life of
the World,
Which is the sum of petty lives, that
wane
And die so this may live—how then
shall each
Of that great multitude of faithful souls
Who walk not on the heights, fulfil
himself,
But by the dutious Life which looks
not forth
Beyond its narrow sphere, and finds its
work,
And works it out; content, this done,
to fall
And perish, if Fate will, so the great
Scheme
Goes onward?
Wherefore am I Queen in Heaven
And Earth, whose realm is Duty, bearing rule
More constant and more wide than
those whose words
Thou heardest last. Mine are the
striving souls
Of fathers plodding day by day obscure
And unrewarded, save by their own
hearts,
Mid wranglings of the Forum or the mart;
Who long for joys of Thought, and yet
must toil

Unmurmuring thro' dull lives from youth to age ;
 Who haply might have worn instead the crown
 Of Honour and of Fame : mine the fair mothers
 Who, for the love of children and of home,
 When passion dies, expend their careful years
 In loving labour sweetened by the sense
 Of Duty : mine the statesman who toils on
 Thro' vigilant nights and days, guiding his State,
 Yet finds no gratitude ; and those white souls
 Who give themselves for others all their years
 In trivial tasks of Pity. The fine growths
 Of Man and Time are mine, and spend themselves
 For me and for the mystical End which lies
 Beyond their gaze and mine, and yet is good,
 Tho' hidden from men and gods.
 For as the flower
 Of the tiger-lily gay with varied hues
 Is for a day, then fades and leaves behind
 Fairness nor fruit, while the green tiny tuft
 Swells to the purple of the clustering grape
 Or golden waves of wheat ; so lives of men
 Which show most splendid, fade and are deceased
 And leave no trace ; while those, unmarked, unseen,

Which no man recks of, rear the stately tree
 Of Knowledge, not for itself sought out, but found
 In the dusty ways of life—a fairer growth
 Than springs in cloistered shades ; and from the sum
 Of Duty, blooms sweeter and more divine
 The fair ideal of the Race, than comes From glittering gains of Learning.
 Life, full life, Full-flowered, full-fruited, reared from homely earth,
 Rooted in duty, and thro' long calm years
 Bearing its load of healthful energies ; Stretching its arms on all sides ; fed with dews
 Of cheerful sacrifice, and clouds of care, And rain of useful tears ; warmed by the sun
 Of calm affection, till it breathes itself In perfume to the heavens—this is the prize
 I hold most dear, more precious than the fruit
 Of Knowledge or of Love."

The goddess ceased As dies some gracious harmony, the child
 Of wedded themes which single and alone
 Were discords, but united breathe a sound
 Sweet as the sounds of heaven.

And then stood forth The last of the gods I saw, the first in place

And dignity and beauty, the young
god
Who grows not old, the Light of
Heaven and Earth,
The Worker from afar, who darts the
fire
Of inspiration on the bard and bathes
The world in hues of heaven—the
golden link
Between High God and Man.

With a sweet voice
Whose every note was perfect inc-
lody—
The melody has fled, the words re-
main—
Apollo sang :

" I know how fair the face
Of Purity ; I know the treasure of
Strength ;
I know the charm of Love, the calmer
grace
Of Wisdom and of Duteous well-spent
lives :
And yet there is a loftier height than
these.

There is a Height higher than mortal
thought ;
There is a Love warmer than mortal
love ;
There is a Life which, taking not its
hues
From Earth or earthly things, grows
white and pure
And higher than the petty cares of
men,
And is a blessed life and glorified.

Oh, fair young souls, strain upward,
upward still,
Even to the heavenly source of Purity !
Brave hearts, bear on and suffer !
Strike for right,

Strong arms, and hew down wrong !
The world hath need
Of all of you—the sensual, wrongful
world !

Hath need of you, and of thee too,
fair Love.
Oh, lovers, cling together ! the old
world
Is full of Hate. Sweeten it ; draw in
one
Two separate chords of Life ; and
from the bond
Of twin souls lost in Harmony create
A Fair God dwelling with you—Love
the Lord !

Waft yourselves, yearning souls, upon
the stars ;
Sow yourselves on the wandering winds
of space ;
Watch patient all your days, if your
eyes take
Some dim, cold ray of Knowledge.
The dull world
Hath need of you — the purblind,
slothful world !

Live on, brave lives, chained to the
narrow round
Of Duty ; live, expend yourselves, and
make
The orb of Being wheel on steadfastly
Upon its path—the Lord of Life
alone
Knows to what goal of Good ; work on,
live on :
And yet there is a higher work than
yours.

To have looked upon the face of the
Unknown
And Perfect Beauty. To have heard
the voice

Of Godhead in the winds and in the
seas.

To have known Him in the circling of
the suns,

And in the changeful fates and lives of
men.

To be fulfilled with Godhead as a cup
Filled with a precious essence, till the
hand

On marble or on canvas falling, leaves
Celestial traces, or from reed or string
Draws out faint echoes of the voice
Divine

That bring God nearer to a faithless
world.

Or, higher still and fairer and more
blest,

To be His seer, His prophet ; to be
the voice

Of the Ineffable Word ; to be the glass
Of the Ineffable Light, and bring them
down

To bless the earth, set in a shrine of
Song.

For Knowledge is a barren tree and
bare,

Bereft of God, and Duty but a word,
And Strength but Tyranny, and Love,
Desire,

And Purity a folly ; and the Soul,
Which brings down God to Man, the
Light to the world ;

He is the Maker, and is blest, is blest !”

He ended, and I felt my soul grow
saint

With too much sweetness.

In a mist of grace
They faded, that bright company, and
seemed

To melt into each other and shape
themselves

Into new forms, and those fair god-
esses

Blent in a perfect woman—all the calm
High motherhood of Heré, the sweet
smile

Of Cypris, fair Athené's carhest eyes,
And the young purity of Artemis,
Blent in a perfect woman ; and in her
arms,

Fused by some cosmic interlacing curves
Of Beauty into a new Innocence,
A child with eyes divine, a little child,
A little child—no more.

And those great gods
Of Power and Beauty left a heavenly
form

Strong not to act but suffer ; fair and
meek,

Not proud and eager ; with soft eyes
of grace,

Not bold with joyous youth ; and for
the fire

Of song, and for the happy careless life,
A sorrowful pilgrimage—changed, yet
the same,

Only Diviner far ; and bearing higher
The Life God-lighted and the Sacrifice.

And when these faded wholly, at my
side,

Tho' hidden before by those too-radiant
forms,

I was aware once more of her, my guide
Psyche, who had not left me, floating
near

On golden wings ; and all the plains of
heaven

Were left to us, me and my soul alone.

Then when my thought revived
again, I said

Whispering, "But Zeus I saw not, the prime Source
And Sire of all the gods."

And she, bent low
With downcast eyes: "Nay. Thou hast seen of Him.

All that thine eyes can bear, in those fair forms

Which are but parts of Him and are indeed

Attributes of the Substance which supports

The Universe of Things—the Soul of the World,

The Stream which flows Eternal, from no Source

Into no Sea. His Purity, His Strength, His Love, His Knowledge, His unchanging rule

Of Duty, thou hast seen, only a part And not the whole, being a finite mind Too weak for infinite thought; nor, couldst thou see

All of Him visible to mortal sight, Wouldst thou see all His essence, since the gods—

Glorified essences of Human mould, Who are but Zeus made visible to men—

See Him not wholly, only some thin edge

And halo of His glory; nor know they What vast and unsuspected Universes Lie beyond thought, where yet He rules, like those

Vast Suns we cannot see, round which our Sun

Moves with his system, or those darker still

Which not even thus we know, but yet exist

Tho' no eye marks, nor thought itself, and lurk

In the awful Depths of Space; or that which is

Not orb'd as yet, but indiscrete, confused,
Sown thro' the void—the faintest gleam of light

Which sets itself to Be. And yet is He

There too, and *rules, none seeing.
But sometimes

To this our heaven, which is so like to earth

But nearer to Him, for awhile He shows Some gleam of His own brightness, and methinks

It cometh soon; but thou, if thou shouldest gaze,

Thy Life will rush to His—the tiny spark

Absorbed in that full blaze—and what there is

Of mortal fall from thee."

But I: "Oh, soul, What holdeth Life more precious than to know

The Giver and to die?" Then she: "Behold!

Look upward and adore." And with the word,

Unhasting, undelaying, gradual, sure, The floating cloud which clothed the hidden peak

Rose slow in awful silence, laying bare Spire after rocky spire, snow after snow, Whiter and yet more dreadful, till at last

It left the summit clear.

Then with a bound, In the twinkling of an eye, in the flash of a thought,

I knew an Awful Effluence of Light, Formless, Ineffable, Perfect, burst on

And flood my being round, and draw
my life
Into itself. I saw my guide bent down
Prostrate, her wings before her face ;
and then
No more.

But when I woke from my long
trance
Behold, it was no longer Tartarus,
Nor Hades, nor Olympus, but the bare
And unideal aspect of the fields
Which Spring not yet had kissed—the
strange old Earth
So far more fabulous now than in the
days
When Man was young, nor yet the
mystery
Of Time and Fate transformed it. From
the hills,
The long night fled at last, the un-
clouded sun,
The dear, fair sun, leapt upward swift,
and smote
My sight with rays of gold, and pierced
my brain
With too much light ere my entranced
eyes
Could hide themselves.

And I was on the Earth
Dreaming the dream of Life again, as
late
I dreamed the dream of Death.
Another day
Dawned on the race of men ; another
world ;
New heavens, and new earth.

And as I went
Across the lightening fields, upon a
bank
I saw a single snowdrop glance, and
bring
Promise of Spring ; and keeping my
old thought
In the old fair Hellenic vesture dressed,
I felt myself a ghost, and seemed to be
Now fair Adonis hastening to the arms
Of his lost love—now sad Persephone
Restored to mother earth—or that high
shade
Orpheus, who gave up heaven to save
his love,
And is rewarded—or young Marsyas,
Who spent his youth and life for song,
and yet
Was happy though in torture—or the
fair
And dreaming youth I saw who still
awaits,
Hopeful, the unveiling heaven, when
he shall see
His fair ideal love. The birds sang
blithe ;
There came a tinkling from the waking
fold ;
And on the hillside from the cot a girl
Tripped singing with her pitcher. All
the sounds
And thoughts which still are beautiful—
Youth, Song,
Dawn, Spring, Renewal—and my soul
was glad
Of all the freshness, and I felt again
The youth and spring-tide of the world,
and thought,
Which seigned those fair and gracious
fantasies.

For every dawn that breaks brings a
new world,

And every budding bosom a new life ;
 These fair tales, which we know so
 beautiful,
 Show only finer than our lives to-day
 Because their voice was clearer, and
 they found
 A sacred bard to sing them. We are
 pent,
 Who sing to-day, by all the garnered
 wealth
 Of ages of past song. We have no
 more
 world to choose from, who,
 where'er we turn
 And through old ! is and fair.
 'et must we si...
 ive no choice ; and if more hard
 the toil
 In noon, when all is clear, than in the
 When of early morn, yet do we
 find
 Achievement its own guerdon, and at
 first
 As the song of manhood grows
 more sweet
 Than the high note of youth.
 For Age, long Age !
 Nought else divides us from the fresh
 young days
 Which men call ancient ; seeing that
 we in turn
 Shall one day be Time's ancients, and
 inspire
 The wiser, higher race, which yet shall
 sing
 Because to sing is human, and high
 thought
 Grows rhythmic ere its close. Nought
 else there is
 But that weird beat of Time, which
 doth disjoin
 To-day from Hellas.

How should any hold
 Those precious scriptures only old-
 world tales
 Of strange impossible torments and
 false gods ;
 Of men and monsters in some brainless
 dream,
 Coherent, yet unmeaning, linked to-
 gether
 By some false skein of song ?
 Nay ! evermore,
 All things and thoughts, both new and
 old, are writ
 Upon the unchanging human heart and
 soul.
 Has Passion still no prisoners ? Pine
 there now
 No lives which fierce Love, sinking into
 Lust,
 Has drowned at last in tears and blood
 —plunged down
 To the blackest depths of Hell ? Have
 not strong Will
 And high Ambition rotted into Greed
 And Wrong, for any, as of old, and
 whelmed
 The struggling soul in ruin ? Hell lies
 near
 Around us as does Heaven, and in the
 World,
 Which is our Hades, still the chequered
 souls
 Compact of good and ill—not all accurst
 Nor altogether blest—a few brief years
 Travel the little journey of their lives,
 They know not to what end. The
 weary woman
 Sunk deep in ease and sated with her life,
 Much loved and yet unloving, pines
 to-day
 As Helen; still the poet strives and sings,
 And hears Apollo's music, and grows
 dumb,

And suffers, yet is happy; still the young
Fond dreamer seeks his high ideal love,
And finds her name is Death ; still
doth the fair

And innocent life, bound naked to the
rock,
Redeem the race ; still the gay tempter
goes
And leaves his victim, stone ; still
common pain
Binds souls with closer links of nobler
love,
Than Death itself can sever ; still the
sight
Of too great beauty blinds us, and we
lose
The sense of earthly splendours, gaining
Heaven.

And still the skies are opened as of
old
To tis entranced gaze, ay, nearer far
And brighter than of yore ; and Might
is there,
And Infinite Purity is there, and high
Eternal Wisdom, and the calm clear face
Of Duty, and a higher, stronger Love
And Light in one, and a new, reverend
Name,

Greater than any and combining all ;
And over all, veiled with a veil of cloud,
God set far off, too bright for mortal
eyes.

And always, always, with each soul
that comes
And goes, comes that fair form which
was my guide,
Hovering, with golden wings and eyes
divine,
Above the bed of birth, the bed of
death,
Still breathing heavenly airs of death-
less love.

For while a youth is lost in soaring
thought,
And while a maid grows sweet and
beautiful,
And while a spring-tide coming lights
the earth,
And while a child, and while a flower
is born,
And while one wrong cries for redress
and finds
A soul to answer, still the world is
young !

G W E N .

PROLOGUE.

Not of old time alone
Was Life a scene of hopes and fears,
High joys and bitter tears ;
Nor Chance nor Fate are done ;
Nor from our fuller Day
The fabled gods have wholly fled away ;

The World and Man to-day are young
As when blind Homer sung.

What if the old forms change ?
They were but forms, the things remain.
What if our fear and pain
Show not like monsters strange ?

The self-same path of life
We tread, who fare beneath the sun
 to-day ;
We sink or triumph in the strife
No otherwise than they.

Compact of good and ill
Their life of old was, as is ours ;
The same mysterious Will
Controlled their finite powers
And to strange thoughts of Fate
And workings of a fixed Necessity
Which rules both small and great.
As they bowed, so bow we.

And Love, the Lord and King—
Not Eros, but diviner far—
Still upon heavenward wing
Mounts like a shining star.
Than clouds and thunders stronger,
He brings a clear ray from the invisible
 Sun ;
And when he shines no longer,
Life's play is done.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—HENRY.

The sweet cold air of these untrodden
 hills
Breathes gently. From the bustle of
the inn
I turn refreshed to this free mountain-
 side,
And listen to the innumerable spray
Of the loud brook beneath, which roars
 and spumes
Brown-white against the granite. These
 thick firs
Shed balm upon the evening air ; there
comes

No footstep but the rabbit's or the
 shrew's
Upon this grassy path, which winds
 and winds
Around the hill-side, under promon-
 tories
Of gold and purple, to the grey old
 church,
Where, chancing yesterday at eve, I
caught
The sound of hymns, richer and fuller
 far
Than those of yore ; and, hidden within
 the porch,
Heard the prayers rising in a tongue
 unknown,
But musical as Greek ; and not un-
 moved
Watched the loud preacher, firing with
 his theme,
Grow rhythmic, and the answering
 moans which showed
He touched the peasant heart.
 Ah, it was long
Since I had heard men pray. I have
seen the cloud
Of incense rolling to the fretted roofs
Of dim cathedrals in the fair old lands
Where Faith weds not with Reason ; I
have heard
The Benediction service, pure and
 sweet,
Lit by young voices ; I have watched
with fear
In college aisles the polished, delicate
 priest
Poise his smooth periods on the razor
 edge
Of a too fine-drawn logic ; I have stood
And listened all unmoved, or all
 ashamed
That I was moved a little, by the
 trick

And artifice of speech which, though I knew it,
 Could cheat the heart a moment, while the preacher
 Enchained his ignorant thousands.
 None of these Moved me as that unknown tongue yesterday.
 I thought my faith reviving. Tush ! what folly !
 That died long years ago from the roots, dried up
 By the strong glare of knowledge, nor could aught
 Of all the miracles the Churchmen feign
 E'er water it to life. That died long since,
 Struck dead by German learning and the strong
 And arrogant Priests of Science. Yet God knows—
 If God there be—I would give my life to know
 The strong Belief of old, when little hands
 Were folded morn and eve, and little eyes
 Scarce open from the night, or half weighed down
 By the long hours of play, were raised to see
 Heaven in a mother's gaze.
 I would my soul might cast from it the dead unlovely load
 Of dead men's speculations, rottennesses Born of unloving lives which took the cell
 And cloister for the home, the midnight lamp
 For the glow of the hearth, and palsied limbs of doubt
 For the strong sire's firm stride. I am young still ;
 Yet often, when the flash of racing ears,
 The shouts, the rushing feet, the joyous din,
 Floated along the avenues at eve To my still college chamber ; there would come
 A weariness, a surfeit, a distaste
 Of all the painted show which men call life,
 Of all the sensual flush which men call love,
 Of all the hollow, vain logomachies Men take for learning, and I seemed to live
 In premature decay, and to have touched The fruit of life with eager lips and found it
 Crumble away in dust. And yet I know How little 'tis my few laborious years Have given me of learning that might take
 The utmost space of our allotted years, Yet leave us still unquenched. And yet what but—
 But seven little years—comes there that parts
 Me and my boyhood ? Seven fleeting years !
 And still I am a youth in frame, in mind,
 In innocence of harm in thought or deed,
 In scorn of wrong, and of the sensual stye
 Wherein the boor lies bound. Only some power
 There is which holds me fast and binds my will ;
 Only some dim and paralyzing force Freezes the springs of action, till I lie

Moored in some tideless and forgotten creek,
 A ship which lies and rots; while on high seas
 The salt winds blow, the white crests break, the sail,
 Filled with the stress of hope and youth and act,
 Speeds to the unseen harbour.
 What shall cure
 This sickness of the soul? I would that I
 Were like that peasant lad whom yester-eve
 I saw—a stalwart boy, on whose red cheek
 The down of manhood showed; whose strong arm wound
 Around his sweetheart's waist, as free from shame,
 While down the village street they loitered slow
 As 'twere the end of life to grow and breed
 And die, as do his herds. Yet here again
 I hesitate to act, because I know
 What love is in its cause, what in its end,
 And by what secret, miry paths full oft
 The winged god steals, when all his violet plumes
 Are smirched with foulness, and his fair eyes droop,
 Cloyed with the grosser sweets of lower earth,
 And the keen arrow flies not through the skies,
 But drops a blunted shaft.
 I would I knew less, or grew wiser, knowing. Golden hair,
 Sweet eyes, the lithe young form, the girlish voice
 Which issues forth so soft from the red lips.
 Arched like the bow of Cupid, the soft neck
 Like a white pillar; these were charms e'now
 I warrant, which might draw as by a spell
 The rustic youth around. Yes, she was fair
 And sweet to see, and better, from her eyes
 A pure young soul looked forth, which was well housed
 Within so pure a body.—“Gwen” he called her—
 'Tis a fair name—when by the vicarage gate
 Her father stayed a moment courteously
 To greet the stranger, and her shy glance turned
 And met my tell-tale eyes. Surely a man
 Who had seen the hollowness of things
 . might here
 Dwell not unhappy—purple hills around,
 And great tranquillity—a wife's sweet smile
 Beside him; little hands to draw him back
 To the kindly earth; and all the healthy load
 Of daily liturgies which make a heaven
 Of earth, and doubt a madness.
 Tush! what folly
 Is this? Have I not passed these things and spurned
 The weakness from me—I, who have given years
 Of youth to learning, and am tired a while
 Of my mistress, nothing more?

And yet, what hope
Was it that brought me hither, this
last night

I spend among the mountains? Was
it to watch
The sunset glories smite the golden sea,
Or hear the fairy rivulet fall in foam
Among the pines? Or was it that I
thought

Perchance a slender form might pass
this way,
Crowned with the crown of youth, and
a sweet voice

Answer my eager greeting? Oh, what
fools
And hypocrites are we, when a strong
Power

Within us, unsuspected, binds us fast
And guides our footsteps! It was not
the face
Of outward nature, but the secret
spring

Which sets our Being to a hidden
end,
And bears the name of Love.

A gleam of blue,
A hat white-plumed—there is no other
form
As graceful; it is she! I may not
love,

Who cannot wed. I shall not see her
more.

I am young still; I will but look a
moment

In those young eyes, and hear that
sweet young voice

Refine our common English, and to-
morrow

She will forget the stranger who was
kind,

And I the mountain-nymph who was
so fair.

SCENE II.

I know not why my books,
The learning that I loved, the charm
of art
Should for a young girl's looks
Fade from my thought and vanish and
depart.

It was but yesterday
I loved to pore upon the classic page
From morn to eve, nor could the
damsels gay,
Who from the parching town
Flock to these pure cool heights, move
me at all.

'Twas rest enough to roam
On the hill-side contented all day long,
And watch the shadows come
O'er moor and hill and purple wastes
of sea;

To see the evening fall
On breathless hill and dale, till sud-
denly
The pale moon rose; then wander
homeward slow
To my loved books with cheek with
health aglow.
And now nor'hill, nor dale nor sea,
Nor the old task sufficeth me.

For two days since, ere night could
fall,
There came a young girl eighteen
summers old—
A simple girl, half peasant, lithe and
tall,
With deep-blue eyes and hair of gold;
And straightway my philosophy,
My learning, all forsaking me,
Left me a love-sick boy—no more—
Me who have drunk so deep of wise-
lore!

Too wise, I thought, to rest content
With any childish blandishment ;
Too wise ! ah fool ! for looking in
such eyes,
'Twere folly to be wise.

For as she tripped round the hill
To visit some cottage lowly,
With her basket of food on her arm,
She showed like Artemis holy ;
And I doffed to her, and she knew
The stranger of yesternight,
And her soft eyes showed more blue
As the rose on her cheek grew bright ;
And, some power impelling me, I—
I who was always counted so shy—
I walked by her side a little, though I
know
• That my tongue was tied and my brain
was slow ;
But however it was, yet her eyes were
blue,
And her roses all aglow.

And I walked by her side till she
came
To the cottage door, where we parted,
And a mingling of pride and of shame
Rose and left me awhile half-hearted.
I to stoop to a simple girl,
The child of a peasant sire !
Though the gown of the clergyman hides
many faults,
Surely 'twas mine to aspire.
What would they say—my friends,
The pale students, polished and proud,
If I, the first of them, stooped to take
A wife from the vulgar crowd ?
Or she, my dear mother, whose pride
Lies hid so deep in the depths of her
heart,
There is scarcely one of us knows it is
there ?

Or my father, the Earl, to whom life
is no more
Than a long procession of hound and
horse,
To whom hardly dishonour itself seems
worse
Than to wed out of one's degree ?

And I wandered out over the hill
For an hour of doubt or more,
And then, so it happened, my feet drew
near
To that humble cottage door ;
And I saw her come forth with a child
on her arm,
Pale-faced and hollow-eyed,
And she seemed a pagan goddess no
more,
But a fair Madonna, with all the charm
Of San Sisto or of the Chair.

And then, as over the hill
We walked back again, though her
voice was still,
Surely was never a man so full
Of chattering talk as I.
But she was not angry at all, not she ;
But from that calm vantage of wise
eighteen
And with only a modest word or so,
And a sweet voice, and musical accent
low,
She would bend her delicate ear to
me,
And listen, as grave and as calm as a
queen,
To the talk which meant little enough,
maybe,
But was understood, I ween.

But however it was, I know
When we came to the gate, and her
little hand

Slid shyly out, as she wished me good-bye,
That as I turned to go
My feet seemed winged on the slope of the hills,
And I hardly knew that the cold half-sleet
Which blots the clouded mountain and chills
The unsheltered wayfarer, wrapping me round,
Had drenched me. For up the silent street
Of the darkling village, jubilant sound
Compassed me; sunlight beamed on me still;
And even to my high inn-chamber I seemed
To be treading that breezy hill.

What is the charm that wakes
The bud, the flower, the fruit, from the cold ground?
What is the power that makes
With song the groves, with song the fields, resound?
One spell there is, so strong to move;
Some call it Spring, and others Love.

I thought my heart lay dead—
Sad heart, long buried deep in dusty lore!—
But now, the winter fled,
It beats with quicker beat than e'er before.—

A simple girl, yet can she move
Spring in my soul, the Spring of Love!

Strange fable, that they taught
Of old, of souls divided as in twain,

Each by the other sought
Until the sundered reunite again,
And then the severed members move,
Knit by the magic spell of Love!

Ah, let us be at one,
Dear soul, if one we be, and are of kin
Before the world begun;
Sure 'tis that I was made thy soul to win.

Ah, child, if we might upward move,
Borne on the golden wings of Love!

SCENE III.

What is it the village leech
Tells me of fever and chill,
And bids me keep warm? Well, perhaps it were wise;
For I fail to sleep, and my limbs are as lead,
And a throb of painfulness splits my head,
And they warned me of this, I remember, again and again.
But surely I know that, came wind or rain,
If only my weary limbs could reach
To that little gate on the breezy hill
And I saw the desire of my eyes,
I should take little thought of myself, not I,
Not even were I doomed to die.

SCENE IV.

What is this? And where am I?
This is not the high inn-chamber, I know,
This white little room where the sunset glow
On the white bed-curtains, as I lie,

Makes orange shadows which fade and fleet ;
 Nor are these my first nurse's reluctant feet
 Which steal so lightly and daintily round,
 As if grudging the faintest ghost of a sound ;
 Nor was the soft voice I heard
 Last night, when the curtain was silently stirred,
 The village doctor's at all :
 I have heard it before, but when, I cannot recall.

For there comes a sense on my brain
 Of time that is gone but has left no trace
 But days which passed and left nothing behind,
 Yet upon the secret depths of the mind
 Are graven that nought may erase.
 As the patient metal retains the sound
 Of the living voice that is dead,
 Even so doth my being retain
 A long procession of days and nights,
 Weary and suffering and heavily sped ;
 And then for a moment the cool air strikes,
 As some one carries me tenderly down,
 And slowly the wheels of my litter climb,
 Leaving the streets of the little town,
 Up the hill through the scented pines.

And then all is blank for a time ;
 A long time, surely, when nothing came
 But wandering dreams and a whispered name.
 Repeated often and like a charm,
 To keep off fancied phantoms of harm.
 "Gwen," was it ? Somewhere I seem to recall,

Far away in some world of forgotten things,
 A fair young face which I loved to see ;
 And one night in this room it smiled on me,
 And the ghastly shapes spread their horrible wings
 And left me at rest for a while.

Ah, no ! I did not dream it at all,
 For now for a week she comes every day,
 A young nurse, virginal, white, and tall,
 And her father, the vicar, whose kind eyes beam
 With a genial kindness he cannot speak ;
 For if ever he ventures a word, it is gall
 To one who is peevish and weak,
 And his words struggle out like stones
 in a stream,
 Jerked together, and jostled, and battered away,
 Till I long that he had done.

But she, my Artemis pure and fair,
 My Madonna, who stood at the cottage gate—
 She is perfect, I hold, from the crown
 of her hair
 To the dainty sole of her delicate foot ;
 And her hand and her voice are as soft
 as silk,
 And she comes hour by hour with a
 tender care,
 With my draught or my food, or with
 rich cool milk.
 Ah ! if only— What, am I then worse than the brute,

That I stoop to thoughts that I loathe
and hate—
I, a great peer's only son ?

For I see on the walls of my simple room,
Which I know was her own, the work of her hand,
At night, in the firelight's flickering gloom,
This text emblazoned in letters of gold—
"For whom Christ died." Ah, if indeed
His words were the words of a real doom,
And his faith the faith of a living creed !
But now souls and beliefs are bargained and sold,
There is no belief by which men may stand,
There is neither creed nor God !

But whether there be or be not indeed,
It shall not change me or move my mind.
Shall I who hate to see weak things bleed,
From the hare which shrieks, to the trout on the hook,
Play false with the simple heart of a maid,
Till her poor soul pines with a terrible need?
I dare not do it ; I am afraid
To see the young soul, with a hopeless look,
Go out for the truth which it cannot find
By dark ways, of truth untrod.

She shall keep unassailed her young innocent heart,
For aught to be whispered by me or done ;
She shall hold her faith ; but 'tis best we part,
For hearts break daily and white lives fade,
And 'twere better indeed I had never been born,
Than to bring a young life to sorrow and woe,
And leave a pure saint to the cold world's scorn,
Shrinking back from the wreck which myself had made.
No, of all the wrong-doing beneath the sun,
Not this one be mine, oh God !

White room ! white curtain ! little bed
That once was hers, whereon she lay
So warm and still, her sunny head
Safe pillow'd till the growing day !

I bless you and I love you all.
I feel so young who once seemed old.
I see a lithe girl-figure, tall,
With grave blue eyes and hair of gold,

Stand by the half-closed door when he,
The village doctor, yesternight,
Came stealthily and looked on me,
With noiseless step and shaded light ;

And I, who deep in lethargy
Seemed buried, to a careless eye,
Lay all unmoved, till suddenly
I caught the echo of a sigh,

And, looking up, beheld my dear,
The first love of my weary heart,
Stand pitiful, and marked the tear
In the soft eye unbidden start.

Yet no prognostics dire they were
He launched against me; only these :
Torpor and weakness, needing care
And watchfulness for remedies ;

And, seeing that I saw and heard,
Turned to me with a cheerful face,
And spoke some random hopeful word,
And nodded smiling to the place,

Where stood the stair. But I, I knew
A sudden rush of hope and strength,
And cared not when, if but at length,
My new-born thought should turn out
true.

SCENE V.

Oh, joy ! I grow stronger day by day ;
And day by day in the sweet summer
weather
I wander over the hills, and away
High up 'mid the purple masses of
heather,
Till mounting aloft with no one by,
All in the bountiful summer weather,
I drink in new life from every pore,
Throbbing and bourgeoning more and
more

In every limb and with every breath,
As, laid on the heather, I watch the
sky
And the purple shadows on sea and
hill,
And hear no sound but the bee's deep
hum,

And watch the shy mountain-sheep
timidly come,
And the kestrel circling, aloft on the
rocky brow,
Fulfilling the marvellous mission of
Death and of Pain.
Death ! ah, but that is far from me
now,
Vanished with Pain and its legions of
ill.
I can walk with my limbs, I can leap,
I can run ;
I rejoice in my strength : the day of
weakness is done.
I live, I grow strong ; I am one with
the World and with Life again.

And sometimes, rare blessing, there
comes with me
A fair young Mountain-nymph over the
hill,
Fearless and free from a thought of
ill.
For her mother, who came of gentler
blood,
Who was always delicate, kind, and
good—
Her mother died long ago, and she
Has lived from her childhood fearless
and free.
I think no touch of passion as yet
Has moved her. Only pity made wet
Her eyes on that night which awoke
my love.
I am only a friend more mature and
wise
Than any she knows, and a shamed
surprise
Would wake in the sapphire depths of
her eyes,
If she saw what blind and passionate
longings move
Within the hidden thoughts of a man.

Ah, well ! but nature is twofold, and sure
It were not wise to ban
The instincts which are neither gross
nor pure.
Let him suppress them who can.
It is only in thought I invade her
virginal peace,
For I know that this sweet rehearsal
of love must cease,
For I am not my own ; but my wife
to be,
Stately and beautiful, waits for me
With that which suffices to build up
our shattered wealth.
Ay, but what if love, awaking and
coming by stealth,
Should bind me in chains on this wild
Welsh hill ?
Or hurry me downward, downward, to
fathomless ill ?
Tush ! how should I be a devil if there
be not a God ?
I am only a young man in whom the
young blood
Pulses quickly, and have I no gratitude
For the life which she saved, the life
which is grown so sweet,
As we roam o'er these breeze-swept
uplands with rapid young feet ?
Oh, joy ! I am one with the life of the
hills, and the skies, and of man !

SCENE VI.

It is done ! I have told her I love her,
Yester-eve as we walked together,
Some power grown tyrannous holding
me fast,
Blotting alike the Future and Past ;
And for answer she gave but a sigh
and a start,

And a blush as bright as the purple
heather,
And a little flutter of bosom and heart,
And a glow like the hues of the sunset
above her.
Oh, fair ash-grove where I told my
love !
Fair ash-grove dear to Cymric verse ✓
Since their bard who sang thee when
Chaucer was young !
Fairest of groves that were ever sung !
Oh, fairest sunset of all that have shone
Since man first woke in Paradise
garden,
Before the temptation, the ruin, the
curse,
Before the strange story was over and
done,
And man an outcast hopeless of pardon !
As we sat on the mossy bank, she and I,
And no creature was near with intrusive
eye,
To mark our innocent joy !
Sweet day when love awakens and
stands,
With his free limbs bare and his out-
stretched hands,
Before two young shame-fast natures
which yearn —
With innocent yearning : clear fires
that burn
Free from all baser alloy.
It is done ; it is over ; and never Eve,
The mother of maidens who love and
grieve,
Looked fairer than did Gwen,
This peasant maiden, when first she
heard
The one ineffable, passionate word
Which stirs for ever the hearts of
maidens and of men.

The bud on the bough,
The song of the bird,
The blue river-reaches .
By soft breezes stirred ;
Oh, soul, and hast thou found again
thy treasure ?
Oh, world, and art thou once more filled
with pleasure ?

Oh, world, hast thou passed
Thy sad winter again ?
Oh, soul, hast thou cast
Thy dull vesture of pain ?
Oh ! winter, sad wert thou and full of
sorrow ;
Oh soul, oh world, the summer comes
to-morrow !

Oh, soul ! 'tis love quickens
Time's languorous feet ;
Oh, world ! 'tis Spring wakens
Thy fair blossoms sweet ;
Fair world, fair soul, that lie so close
together,
Each with sad wintry days and fair
Spring weather !

As on the clear hill-sides we walked
together,
A gleam of purple passed over the sea,
And, glad with the joy of the summer
weather,
My love turned quickly and looked on
me.
Ah, the glad summer weather, the fair
summer weather !
Ah, the purple shadow on hill and sea !

And I looked in her eyes as we walked
together,
And knew the shy secret she fain would
hide,

And we went hand in hand through the
blossoming heather,
She who now was my sweetheart, and
I by her side ;
For the shade was the shadow of Love's
wing-feather,
Which bares, as he rises, the secrets we
hide.

Now, come cloud or sunshine, come
joy or weeping,
It can be no longer as 'twas before.
Just a shadow of change o'er the soul
comes creeping,
And farewell to the joyance and freedom
of yore ;
For it crosses Love's face, where he
lies a-sleeping,
And he soars awaking, nor slumbers
more.

I have found her !
At last, after long wanderings, dull
delays,
I have found her ;
And all my life is tuned to joy and
praise.

I have found her !

A myriad-myriad times
In man's long history this thing has
been ;
All ages, climes,
This daily, hourly miracle have seen
A myriad-myriad times ;

Yet is it new to-day.
I have found her, and a new Spring
glads my eyes.
World, fair and gay

As when Eve woke in dewy Paradise,
Fade not away !

Fade not, oh light,
Lighting the eyes of yet another pair,
But let my sight
Find her as I have found her, pure and
fair !
Shine, mystic light !

Yes, it is sweet to be ~
Awaited, and to know another heart
Beats faster for our coming, and to see
The blush unbidden start
To the fair cheek, and mark young
Love's alarms
Perturb and make more fair the girlish
charms.

I am once more
A young man with the passions of my
kind ;
I am no pedant, glorying as before
In barren realms of mind.
The springtide that awakens land and
sea,
The Spring of Youth and Love,
awakens me.

It calls, and all my life
Answers from its dim depths, "I come,
I hear."
It breaks, it bursts, in sudden hope and
strife,
And precious chills of fear.
It comes with tremulous, furtive thrills
which can
Strip from me all the Past, and leave
me, man.

SCENE VII.—GWEN.

Dear hills, dear vales, so calm and
bright
In dewy dawn, in silvery night !
Dear woods and uplands cool and wild,
Where yesterday I walked a child,
I love you, but I roam no more
With all the careless joy of yore.
My girlish days are past and done ;
I know my womanhood begun.

What was it one so wise could see
In an untutored child like me ?
What was it ? Nay, 'twere sin to
prove
By earthy tests the ways of love.
Whate'er it was, Love's perfect way
Is without doubting to obey.

I do obey. I lay my soul
Low at Love's feet for his control.
Farewell, oh paths half hidden in
flowers,
Trodden by young feet in childish
hours ;
White bed, white room, and girlish
home !
The hour of Love and Life is come !

I shall not watch as yesterday .
The orange sunset fade to gray,
Nor roam unfettered as the bee,
A maiden heart and fancy free.
I am bound by such a precious chain
I may not wander forth again.

Oh, bond divine ! oh, sweet, sweet
chain !
Oh, mingling of ecstatic pain !
I am a simple girl no more.
I would not have it as before.

One day of love, one brief, sweet day,
And all my past is swept away.

Oh, vermeil rose and sweet,
Rose with the golden heart of hidden
fire,
Bear thou my yearning soul to him I
love,
Bear thou my longing and desire.

Glide safe, oh sweet, sweet rose,
By fairy-fall and cliff and mimic strand,
To where he muses by the sleeping
stream,
Then eddy to his hand.

Drown not, oh vermeil rose,
But from thy dewy petals let a tear
Fall soft for joy when thou shalt know
the touch
And presence of my dear.

Tell him, oh sweet, sweet rose,
That I grow fixed no more, nor flourish
now
In the sweet maiden garden-ground of
old,
But severed even as thou.

Say from thy golden heart,
From virgin folded leaf and odorous
breath,
That I am thine to wear or cast away,
His own in life or death.

Thy shadow, oh tardy night,
Creeps onward by valley and hill,
And scarce to my straining sight
Show the white road-reaches still.

Oh, night, stay now a little, little space,
And let me see the light of my beloved's
face !

My love is late, oh night,
And what has kept him away ?
For I know that he takes not delight
In the garish joys of day.
Haste, night, dear night, and bring my
love to me !
What if his footsteps halt and tarry but
for thee ?

Nay, what if his footsteps slide
By the swaying bridge of pine,
And whirled seaward by the tide
Is the loved form I counted mine !
Oh, night, dear night that comest yet
dost not come,
How shall I wait the hour that brings
my darling home ?

Fair star that on the shoulder of yon
hill

Peepest, a little eye of tranquil night,
Come forth. Nor sun nor moon there
is to kill

Thy ray with broader light.

Shine, star of eve that art so bright and
clear ;

Shine, little star, and bring my lover
here !

My lover ! oh, fair word for maid to
hear !

My lover who was yesterday my friend !
Oh, strange we did not know before
how near
Our stream of life smoothed to its fated
end !

Shine, star of eve, as Love's self, bright
and clear;

Shine, little star, and bring my lover
here!

He comes! I hear the echo of his feet.

He comes! I fear to stay, I cannot go.

Oh, Love, that thou art shame-fast,
bitter-sweet,

Mixed with all pain, and conversant
with woe!

Shine, star of eve, more bright as night
draws near;

Shine, little star, and bring my lover
here!

What shall I do for my love,
Who is so tender
And dear and true,
Loving and true and tender,
My strength and my defender —
What shall I do?

I will cleave unto my love,
Who am too lowly
For him to take.
With a self-surrender holy
I will cleave unto him solely;
I will give my being wholly
For his dear sake.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—HENRY.

Only a little week
Of meetings under the star,
Since the blissful evening I dared to
speak,
Sweet evening that seems so far!
And already the cruel post brings me
a word

That my mother the countess, who, far
away

At a German bath with her ailing lord,
Has been dreaming the early autumn

away,

Returns to-day, and to-morrow will
come

To take the invalid leisurely home.

Ah, mother! I fear that your pride will
scorn

That your son should mate with a lowly
bride,

Though a vicar's daughter is well
enough born

For all but a foolish pride.

And I know, moreover, your heart is
set

On her to whom no word is spoken yet,
The lofty heiress who comes to restore
Our house to the splendours of yore.
Poor mother, your patience was sadly
tried

By the studious fancies which kept me
apart

From the London which now seems to
hold your heart;

And, alas! I hardly know how to face
The blanl. amaze of your haughty gaze,
The cold surprise of patrician eyes,
As you listen to my disgrace.

Disgrace, did I say? Ah! where
In all the bewildering town

Is any as Gwen is, fair

Or comely, or high or pure?

Or when did a countess's coronet crown

A head with a brighter glory of hair?

Or how could titular rank insure

A mind and a heart so sweet?

They shall not shame me to cheat or

beguile

My darling, my queen, my treasure,

Nor blot from my soul the pure pleasure
Of the brief hours that have been.
And if indeed I must go for a while,
It shall not be for long, but a little
while;
And then I will hasten back again with
passionate feet,
To bask again in her smile.
I must tell her all to-night, sweet to-
night, when we meet.

SCENE II.

I have seen her once again,
I have seen her again, my dear.
And oh, but parting was a bitter pain !
And oh, the ready, child-like tear !
I did not know, even I, before,
With how immense and ponderous a
chain
Love binds the girlish heart, and holds
it evermore.

For I hardly know at all
How it came to be, but as we two spoke
Of parting and absence her sweet voice
broke,
And she paled and wavered as if to fall ;
And 'twas only a ready encircling arm,
And lip to lip in a close embrace,
That brought back ' the rose to her
troubled face,
And recalled the wandering life from
its swift alarm.
Dear young soul that Fate has given
me to hold,
And shall I forsake thee, come weal or
woe ?
No, I will not betray thy sweet trustful-
ness ; no,
Not for millions of gems and gold.

But before I left her and went
My way to the inn, while the village
street
Echoed loud with the rhythymical wheels
and feet
Of my mother's chariot, we vowed
together
That, through every change of life's
fickle weather,
We would cling to each other and never
part.
And so I, the round of festivities done,
And the pheasants killed and the county
won,
Will steal from my gilded trammels, and
come
To the Welsh hillside which is now my
home,
And the child who has my heart.

Was ever a girlish heart so fair
As Gwen's, or free from earth ?
She is pure and innocent, I swear,
As an infant at the birth.
She is full, indeed, of much old-world
lore,
From the lessons her mother taught her
of yore ;
Mozart's sweet melodies loves to re-
hearse,
And many a tome of forgotten verse ;
And something of modern letters she
knows,
And oft in fancy with Elaine goes,
As she floats down lifeless to Camelot.
But of wrong and evil she knows no
jot.
She dreams no more of the ways of
men,
Their deceits, their treacheries,

.Or of coarse, bold women,—my little
Gwen,
With the clear, deep, trusting eyes—
Than if you should come by some
Arctic main,
Where a world of ice shuts humanity
out ;
On some simple forgotten colony,
Which had never heard of the world or
wealth ;
Or a convent set on a scarpèd hill.
Tush ! but they would corrupt each
other, no doubt,
Or some echo of evil would creep in by
stealth.
But for Gwen the pure cold stream of
her will
Flows along the mountain-side, taking
no stain,
Crystal-clear, reflecting its kindred sky.
Was ever a soul so fair ?

Forget me not, dear soul ! Yet where-
fore speak
The words of freedom, where the thing
is not ?
Forget me not ! And yet how poor
and weak
My prayer, who know that nothing is
forgot !
Low voice, or kindling eye, or glowing
cheek,
Forget them not !

Forget me only if forgetting prove
Oblivion of low aims and earthly
thought ;
Forget the blinder appetites which
move

Through secret ways, by lower nature
taught ;
Forget them, love !

Remember only, with fond memory,
The exaltation, the awakened soul,
Swift moments strong to bind my heart
to thee,
Strong tides of passionate faith which
scorn control—

In these remember me !

Dear child so sweet in maidenhood,
How should I doubt, regarding thee,
A secret spring of hidden Good,
Which rules all things and bids them
be ?

Dear soul, so guileless and so pure,
So innocent and free from stain,
As 'twere untempted Eve again,
I lean upon thee and grow sure.

I love no more the barren quest,
The doubt I cherished I despise ;
I am a little while at rest,
Seeing the Godhead in thine eyes.

Can good be, yet no Giver ? Can
The stream flow on, yet own no
source ?
From what deep well of hidden Force
Flows the diviner stream in man ?

I know not. Some there is, 'tis clear,
A mystery of mysteries.
Thy youth has gazed upon it, dear,
And bears its image in thine eyes.

Yes, God there is. Too far to know,
It may be, yet directing all.

It is enough ; we ~~want~~, we grow,
We ripen, we decay, we fall,

To a great Will. No empty show
Of aimless and unmeaning ends
Our life is, but the overflow
Of a great Spring which always tends

To a great Deep. The silver thread
Between the Fountain and the Sea.
We are for ever, quick or dead,
And Source and Ending both are He.

It is enough—no more I know ;
But maybe from thy faithful eyes,
Thy trust that knows no chill, thy glow
Of meek and daily sacrifice,

I may relearn the legend fair
I whispered at my mother's knee,
And seeing Godhead everywhere,
Confess, " And this man too was He."

SCENE III.—GWEN.

Oh, happy days so lately done,
And yet removed so far away
Before our passion-tide begun
And life's young May !
Shy early days of sun-and showers,
When all the paths were hidden in
flowers
Tender and sweet,
And on the mountain-side the year,
With girlish change of smile and tear,
Tripped with light feet ;
And by the melting snows the violet
came,
And on the wolds the crocus like a
saffron flame !

Daily some song of lonely bird,
By tufted field or tasseled grove,
From the clear dawn to solemn eve
was heard,
But few of love.
Nay, rather virginal flutings pure and
clear,
Passionless preludes, ah, how dear !
Nor yet upon the nest,
The bright-eyed fearless mother aste,
Nor yet high in mid-heaven her soaring
mate
Thrilled his full breast,
Nor yet within the white domain of
song
Love burst with eyes aglow the maiden
choir among.

But when the fuller summer shone,
Soon as the perfumed rose had come,
Lo, all the reign of song was done,
The birds all dumb ;
And for the choir which did before
rejoice,
Low, tuneless accents of an anxious
voice
Weighed down with care,
And dim forebodings choking the high
note
Which once resounded from the joyous
throat
So full and fair.
I would not lose the love which is so
dear,
But 'tis oh the parted days of the im-
perfect year !

Oh, soft dove gently cooing
To thy mate upon her nest,
And hast thou known undoing
And deep unrest ?

Hath any pain of wooing
Pierced thy soft breast?

Oh, pale flower ever turning
To thy great lord the Sun,
And dost thou know a yearning
Which is never done,
For cloudless days returning
And June begun?

Ah, heart ! there is no pleasure
As thine, nor grief.
Time Future holds the treasure :
Time Past, the thief.
What power brings this one, measure,
Or that, relief?

Ah ! 'tis not very long
Since I was light and free,
And of all the burden of pain and
 wrong
No echo reached to me ;
But day by day, upon this breeze-swept
 hill,
Far from the too great load of human
 ill,
I lived within the sober walls of home,
Safe-set, nor heard a sound of outward
 evil come.

It is not that I know,
By word or any deed,
What depths of misery lie below,
What hearts that bleed ;
But, since I have felt the music of my
 soul
Touched by another's mastering hand,
I seem to hear unfathomed oceans roll,
As when a child I saw the Atlantic
 lash the strand.

Oh, mother, who art dead
So long beneath the grass,
Lift up once more, lift thy beloved
 head
When we two pass,
And tell me—tell me if this passionate
 pain,
This longing, this ineffable desire
For one I know so lately, be the gain
To which young maids aspire.
Is this to love, to kiss my chain and
 feel
A dominant will to which 'tis joy to
 kneel ?

Oh, mother, I am a maid ;
I am young, I know not men.
My great joy makes me shrink and be
 afraid.
It is not now as then
When first we walked together on the
 hill.
I take no longer, thought for any soul
Of those I loved before and cherish
 still ;
I care not for the poor, the blind, the
 lame ;
I care not for the organ's solemn roll,
Or sabbath hymns and prayers, who
 am burnt as of a flame.

Nay, love ! how can I doubt thee
Who art so dear,
Though I pine away without thee
In the fading year ?
The ash flings down its leaf, the
 heather
Is bloomless in the autumn weather ;
The mountain paths are wet with rime,
Where we together eve by eve
 Would wander in the joyous time,

Fair hours when thy returning strength
Came with the days' increasing length.
I pace alone the dear familiar road
Where first we met. I walk alone;
I have no aim nor purpose, none—
Only to think of those soft days and
still believe.

Last evening, on a distant hill,
A wreath of cloud-mist dealing sleet
Compassed my homeward steps, as still
I toiled with weary feet.
Oh, what if the snow, like a winding-
sheet,
Had stayed the steps of my life and my
troubled will,
And closed on me for ever, concluding
there
My little hopes and joys, and maybe
my despair !

Nay, I will not doubt him nor be
afraid ;
He is all that is good, I know it, tender
and true.
But I fear he is higher in rank than he
said ;
For one day, I remember it well, as he
lay
Very weak on his bed, a letter came
Coronet-blazoned, and half in shame
I lifted my eyes, and he saw I knew,
And his face grew troubled and never
more
Was his gaze as frank as it was before.
Tender it was, indeed, and ardent and
true,
But not as frank as before.

But I count the days till he comes
again ;
I long for him with a dull, deep pain.

I will do whatever thing my love
commands ;
I will go or stay ; I am taken as a bird
in his hands.
Oh, love, my love ! tarry not long ;
I am not happy nor strong.

Delay not, love ; the sun has lost his
fire.

Stay not ; the cold earth loses warmth
and light.

Summer is dead, and Winter comes to
blight

The waiting world's desire.

Come back, and coming bring back
Spring with thee,

Spring for my heart though all the
world lie dead ;

My life will burst in blossom at thy
tread—

Oh, love, come back to me !

ACT III.

SCENE I.—HENRY.

Once more upon these dear familiar
hills
I tread ; 'tis autumn now, 'twas summer
then.

The valley paths are deep in mire ; the
leaf

Falls sadly from the bough ; the village
inn,

So noisy then, when four months since
I lay.

'Twixt life and death, is silent ; a gray
mist

Hangs o'er the breathless lowland. All
the hills

Are clouded, on whose summits a thin
cowl
Of snowflakes sits at times. Summer
is dead ;
A sad autumnal stillness over all
The dull world broods, and in my heart
I know
Summer is dead—sweet summer, ah,
too brief !

For now, alas ! I know
What folly 'twas that kept me here
Three little months ago.
I have drunk deep since then of cups
that cheer,
The sea of eyes, the beat of popular
hands,
When to his thought the high-set plat-
form reels,
As now the solitary speaker stands
Poised like a swimmer on high waves,
who feels
The world cut off from him and knows
To fail is ruin. I have known
Men better since, and felt how near
And yet far off are clown and peer ;
And known how better than all lore,
Better than love itself, and more,
How satisfying and how great,
It is to aid the ship of state,
The labouring bark, which reeling goes
'Mid sunken rocks, and watching foes.
And best of all I know
How baseless was my sweet Arcadian
dream.
I could not bear—I know it well—
To live retired from the central stream
Of life, as if in a hermit's cell.
I long for the hurry, the passion, the
glow

Of full life lived in the eyes of men ;
I can bear no longer to dream in
inglorious ease.
A great name, the voice of the people,
authority, these
Are more than my simple Gwen.

Ay, and I have learnt besides,
What I scarce suspected before,
By what poor expedients my father has
striven
To keep the wolf from his door—
Bubble schemes, mine-ventures which
came to nought,
And some senseless bet on some
swindling race,
And I know not what gambling-follies
beside.
But I know that our lawyer, with long-
drawn face,
Came to me with secret warnings of ill,
And hints that a prudent marriage
alone could fill
The coffers so nearly empty, again.
Poor father ! it was not right, for your
dreams of gain,
And your pompous life and wasteful,
orderless state,
To diminish a family hoard that was
never great ;
But I know that if the blow he hinted
should come,
And the Jew and the broker harried
our ancient home,
It would kill you and drive my mother
distracted.
Nay, I could not bear to see it. My
path is clear :
I must see you once more and leave
you, my love, my dear.

SCENE II.

I did not know it, I swear ;
 I did not dream that a young girl, fair
 and free,
 Could long care for one grave and
 studious and worn like me.
 I thought our brief passion was dead ;
 I thought I had schooled my heart to
 obey my head ;
 But when I saw her, she showed so
 fair,—
 It was just at the self-same spot where
 we used to meet,—
 That I hastened up the steep path with
 wings to my feet ;
 And she did not see me at first, but
 stood for a while
 Silent and musing and still, with a sweet
 half-smile,
 As if bent on some mingled vision of
 joy and pain,
 And I knew that our love was not
 dead, but slept and awoke again.

 But when at length she turned her
 eyes,
 With a beautiful, pitiful look of sur-
 prise,
 And a questing glance, and a shiver
 and a start,
 Oh, 'twas then that she touched my
 heart !
 And before a moment passed again we
 stand,
 With eyes on each other bent, and
 hand linked to hand ;
 And with hardly a spoken word, we
 are face to face,
 Strained together again in a close
 embrace ;

And I failed, I failed to tell her what
 should have been told,
 For the heart of a maid is higher than
 rank or gold.

But to-night I must speak and tell her
 all,
 I must tell her though the sky fall.

SCENE III.

It is over, it is done.
 She from the clear frank depths of her
 maidenly pride :
 " Dear, it is sudden indeed, but I
 thought it would come,
 For I doubt if any are happy under the
 sun.
 But you, you shall not imperil the pride
 of your home ;
 I know you a fitting mate for a lostier
 bride.
 I will love you and pray for you always.
 And now good-bye.
 Be good, my dear, to your wife. But I
 Have awoke from my dream in time,
 and will tend
 My poor, who, I fear, have missed a
 friend ;
 And my father is growing old, and will
 want me here.
 Fear not, I shall not be unhappy.
 Farewell, my dear !"
 And she went with feet as swift as the
 bounding roe,
 And vanished before I knew she was
 minded to go,
 And left me alone with the dying day
 in the fading year.

I cannot leave her thus ; I must see her again,
Though I know it is cruel to both and renewal of pain.
But all night long have I lain awake, Tossing and severed for her dear sake, As when she nursed me to life in her little room ; And once, when I dozed a moment, I seemed to hear Her sweet voice calling aloud in accents of fear, Calling my name in a voice which sank to a moan ; And, though I know it was dreaming fancy alone, I cannot leave her thus. I am harassed with fears ; I must see her again ; I must write. And lo ! through the gloom The slow dawn of autumn breaks in mist and in tears.

Dear, I must see you again.
Bring with you the last sweet rose
Which lingers still in your garden-ground,
The last red summer rose.

Do you mind how you sent me a rose
Along the swift streamlet's flow,
A sweet and a blushing rose ?
It is faded—'twas long ago.

Come, dear. A dream visited me In the weary vigilight ; I heard your voice calling to me In grievous pain and affright.

I must see you. The swift wheels stay At the spot we have known of yore ;

Be there, ere they bear me away From my love for evermore.

SCENE IV.—GWEN.

The light has gone out of my life, Yet I will not repine. Nay, 'tis well to have passed betimes through the struggle and strife.

Shall I grieve that he comes not again, That my love is not mine ? Ah, folly ! the whole creation travails in pain.

I will live my own life once more ; I will succour the weak ; I will be but a little more grave than I was before.

I will strive to repay the deep love My fond father fails to speak ; Though the path may be lonely and drear, yet the heavens are above.

Ah ! my love who no longer art mine, Yet my love till I die, I will strive to be patient and strong, but I wither and pine.

A letter from my love,
In the well-remembered hand,
Once again, yet we have parted :
'Tis hard to understand.

A letter from my love !
Dear letter, and what says he ?
"I am going away for ever.
Come once more, dear to me,

" And with you bring a rose."—
My love, I will be there ;
I will bring you a red, red rosebud
Upon your heart to wear.

But you must not crush it, dear,
Or bind it to you too fast,
Or the poor flower's scent, I fear,
Will bring back to you the Past.

Wear your rose lightly, dear,
For ornament or pleasure ;
But the virgin rose of a maiden's heart
Keep safe as a precious treasure.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—HENRY.

How weak are we and blind !
How ignorant of fate !
For I thought I was steadfast and firm,
and knew my mind,
Till I saw her at the gate ;
And next day, as soon as the train rolled
on and I sat alone,
I wished that I had not written to give
her pain,
And I prayed that she might not come,
nor might I see her again.

But when the swift wheels slackened
and grew still
At the little wayside station beyond the
mill,
There alone by the platform stood my
treasure, my dear,
Very pale, with a rose in her hand ; full
of maidenly fear.
And I sprang out to her, and we
whispered ardent and low,

With sad hearts throbbing together and
cheeks aglow,
For a precious minute or two, till the
signal to go ;
And then, all my youth and my love
rising up like a flame,
I whispered, " I cannot leave you, my
love, my bride.
Come to me, my own, my wife ! "

And lo ! as in a trance,
With a shiver and tottering limbs, and
a pitiful glance,
As one who walked in a dream, she
obeyed and came
Constrained, and sank fainting down in
her place at my side.

There she lay long time on my breast,
very pale and chill,
And I trembled to see her poor white
face, my dear ;
And the swift train had sped us on far,
when, with something of fear,
She said quickly, " Where am I ? "
And I : " With your husband to
be.
We are long miles away from your
home. You will trust me, my
own ? "
And she moaned, " Ah ! how could I
leave my father alone ?
Poor father ! Ah ! what will they think
of me when they know ?
They will deem me unmaidenly—bold.
Let me go. We were mad ;
It is nothing to women to wither and
pine and be sad.
Let me go. It is better. Some weak-
ness constrained me to come.
I will go and be happy, fear not, with
my equals at home."
But I soothed her, and flashed a mes-
sage that all was well,

And to promise a letter next day, telling
all that there was to tell ;
And she lay like a child on my heart,
with her head bent wearily down,
And lo ! on the autumn twilight, the
glare and the turmoil of town.

I hold him wrong who opens wide
The secret, sacred doors of love,
The paths by shame-fast footsteps tried,
The mazes of the enchanted grove.

I hold him wrong ; but Gwen the wife
Is dearer far than Gwen the maid.
We walk by hidden deeps of life,
And no man maketh us afraid.

I hold him wrong ; but who can prize
At its full worth the love he gains,
Till bound by mutual sacrifice,
Till fused by mutual joys and pains ?

Too happy are the halcyon days ;
For Time the taker, Time the thief,
Steals ghostlike down the flowery ways,
And makes the blessed moments brief.

I have left her oftentimes for a while,
And then, on some pretext hastily
sauad,
Have hurried back to bask in her
smile ;
But now I am here fast bound,
For my father is failing, day by day,
And 'tis hard to keep the harpies at
bay,
Who would enter and drive him from
house and home.

They must not suspect that I, who am
alone
The mainstay on which they depend to
secure their own,
Am not the lover of one who brings
lands and wealth,
But bound to a penniless girl whom I
wedded by stealth ;
They must not dream it ; and therefore
here must I stay,
Though I seem indeed to lose every
day
That keeps me away from my love.
Dear soul, it is springtime again, and
fresh currents move
Through the world, and stir the life in
blossom and tree,
And the little hidden life which ere
long shall be.

SCENE II.—GWEN.

Dear love, I will be patient, yet
I long to see you, and I fear
Lest absence lead you to forget
The things that once were dear.

You tell me we awhile must hide
Our union safe from prying eyes,
But when your ailing father dies
You will proclaim me as your bride.

I long that this might be, nor wait
The death of any. I have been
These last six months, 'spite love and
fate,
Dearest, as happy as a queen.

But now another dearer life
Forbids my careless patience more.

Pray God it may not come before
I am acknowledged as your wife.

I did not know,
When I walked careless on the hills,
The hopeless load of human ills ;
But neither could I know
To what full height our happiness can
grow.

Sing, caged bird, sing !
Is this your constant strain ?
"I would, I would that I were free ;
I would, I would, I would that I were
once again
Sitting alone within a leafy tree ;
I would that I might be
Breathing free air far from this gilded
pain."

Ah, bird ! I would be free
As you, for I weary here.
And yet, my bird, I have one so dear,
so dear,
That, if he might only bide with me,
I should no longer care
To change this stifling, fettered air
For the free mountain-breathings fresh
and fair.

Cold east and drear,
Thy chill breath veils the world in
cheerless gray.
Sad east, while thou art here,
Life creeps with halting feet its weary
way.
I feel you pierce my heart, oh, cold
east wind !
Sad east ! that leavest lifeless plains
behind.

The dull earth, watching, sleeps
Within her leafless bowers,
Until the west wind coming weeps
Soft tears that turn to flowers.
Oh, cruel east ! that dost delay the
world,
Withering the leaf of hope while yet
unfurled.

Over this gray cheerless town
The stifling smoke-mist hangs, a squalid
pall,
And night, too swift for springtide,
settles down
Before the shades of mountain-evenings
fall.
I sicken here alone, dull day by day,
To watch the turmoil wake and fade
away.

Why does my dear not come,
Or write or send some little loving
word ?
It is not here as 'twas at home.
I have no companion but this prisoned
bird ;
No friend in all the throng to hear my
sighs ;
No glance, but the cold stare of alien
eyes.

No friend, nor love nor care
To hold me ; but when summer suns
return
And wake this stagnant and exhausted
air,
The little dearer life for which I yearn
May wake, and make me happier than
of old,
Watching the innocent life my arms
enfold.

Cold east and drear,
Spreading a noontide darkness on the town.
You shall not blight my faith, nor make me fear,
Nor leave me in despond, nor drag me down.
I am alone; but, if he loves me still,
I am not all alone, sad days and chill.

SCENE III.

I grieve that my father stays away,
Though his letters are always dear and kind,
But sometimes I think they seem to convey
Some shadow of pain on a doubtful mind;
But he does not know that I am alone,
For I could not tell him my dear was gone,
And it may be he has not forgiven quite
Our foolish and hurried flight.
What? Do I not know—forgive, did I say?—
That nought which falls short of committed wrong
Would keep his heart from his child for long.
Nought that a kiss would not chase away?
Dear father! I would I might welcome him here!

For, brooding here day by day,
My mind grows full of a formless fear,
And I dread the glance of the women;
the sneer
Which I seem to see on their lips and eyes,
As they ask sometimes with a hard surprise

If my husband is ailing; he keeps away—
And I have but faltering words to say.
And to-day I thought, as I sate in my lonely room,
With a little frock on my lap, in the gathering gloom,
And the woman came with the lights, that she seemed to look
With the old respect no more, but a cold rebuke.
Does she doubt, then, I am his wife? I will fly; I will go;
I will tell her all my secret. Ah, no!
ah, no!
Great Heaven, does she think he is gone and will no more come?
Oh, Henry, 'tis cruel to leave me, come to me, come home!

SCENE IV.

This is the fourth dull week—
I am wretched and sick at heart—
Since the thought came first which I fear to write or speak,
And I have no rest at night; for I suddenly start,
Thinking I hear his voice calling to me in pain,
Mixed with voices of scorn sometimes, through the dead city-night;
And then, if my tired eyes sink to slumber again,
I wake in deadly fright.
And before the bustle of life revives in the street,
I watch for the hurrying sound of the messenger's feet,
And I hold my breath as he comes with a sickening fear.

But the sharp summons passes on
quickly, and never here
He stays ; but I must not despair, nor
ever forget
That I live for a ripening life, which
'twould injure to fret.

But I know that my face is pale and
anxious and thin,
Which my love would hardly know, if
he saw me again ;
And I look in the glass, and I start to
see therein
Two hollow eyes answer my gaze with
a look of pain.
And perhaps he would love me no
more in my beauty's disgrace ;
Perhaps he was only a slave to a foolish
face ;
Perhaps— But I know I am sick in
body and mind,
Or I could not doubt my love, who was
always kind.

My heart is heavy,
My life runs low,
My young blood's pulses
Beat faint and slow.

I cannot believe,
Yet I dare not doubt,
For when faith is shadowed
Love's fire goes out.

Oh, Love, what is this
That thy strong power brings
To these thou hast touched
With thy vanishing wings ?

Oh, Love, it was cruel
To bring us to pain.

I will hide me away
From the cold world again.

I can stay here no longer ;
Whatever may come,
I will go to my father
And—die at home.

My heart is heavy,
My life runs slow ;
To my Father in Heaven }
I open my woe.

SCENE V.

What is it that has been ?
Let me once recall again
The fear that came upon me,
And the story of my pain.

Yester-eve, as I sat alone,
Somebody entered, and read
How the Earl, at some foreign bath,
Had been ailing and now was dead ;

" And pointed to the place,
And the letters seemed to swim,
And the whole room whirling round
and round,
As my sight grew faint and dim.

For 'twas said that the new Earl,
His mourning done, would wed
The heiress of whom he told me before ;
And I wished that I was dead.

And they muttered, with freezing
glances,
" They had thought 'twas thus, before ; "
And I could not answer a single word
But fell upon the floor.

And now I lie ailing and weak,
Sick in body and mind and heart;
But to-morrow, if God help me,
I will rouse me and depart.

Oh, father, you will not spurn me,
Nor think me what they say,
But take us back to your heart and life,
And my grief shall fade away.

SCENE VI.

Oh, the sweet air of the hills,
That on this fair summer night
Breathes on me as I 'scape at last
From the glare of the long day,
From the dust of the long plain,
And the rushing, maddening train !

Here I mount among the pines
By the path we knew so well.
All is there unchanged but I.
Hark ! the thunder of the fall.
See the ash-grove where we sate.
There we lingered at the gate.

Nothing changed, but I am changed.
Slowly up the well-loved steep,
Failing footsteps toiling slow,
Where, upon the morning hills,
Twelve months since my feet would go
Bounding lightly as the roe.

None have seen me, that is well—
Yet if here I were to fail—
Courage ! I shall reach there—Nay,
I must rest awhile ; then climb
Slowly through the fragrant gloom,
Where my garden roses bloom.—

It is finished. Dear white head
Bending low upon thy book,

Homely lamp, familiar room,
Ye will welcome me, I know.
Open, father ; I am come
Broken-hearted to my home !

ACT V.

SCENE I.—GWEN.

It is over now.
I have been a long time ill,
But to-day I am able to wander slow
To the churchyard round the hill.
'Tis there they have laid my little love,
Who lingered three little months—it
was not long —
And there they will lay me too, ere the
waning light grows strong.

It is but a little grave
Where my little one is laid,
But I keep it decked with white flowers
every day,
And above, a kindly yew's protecting
shade
Shelters it safe from rain and wind.
Sleep fast, my darling, sleep while yet
you may ;
Your mother will not linger long behind.

Dear child, I wonder when
The last great morning breaks and we
shall wake,
If I may bear you then
Safe in my nursing arms for Him to
take :
Or will He suffer you to come before,
White soul, while I am waiting at the
door ?

Dear little grave, I strew
Fresh autumn flowers and garden
blooms on you ;

I strew upon you roses white and red ;
I fling my heart upon you, narrow bed !

Once, twelve months since, I launched
my heart, a rose,
Where, lit with laughter, Love's sweet
river goes,
And lo ! once more the year's swift
pinions move,
And now I cast it on the grave of love.

My love, my self, my child,
Lie buried here, and I am free again.
I would I were a slave : I loved my
chain.

I would that I might see your sweet
eyes mild ;
They were your father's eyes, who loves
not me——

I blame him not, but do forgive for
thee.

It is not long I stay, my life, my dear,
Not long until we are together here.

Last year—it seems an age ago—
I had not seen him : then we went
Together on our road ; and so,
By ways and converse innocent,
We gained at last the sacred gate
Of wedlock, and the hand of Fate
Listed the latch, and we passed in
To the enchanted ground therein.
And now the winds of autumn rave,
And love lies dead within a grave.

Dear love, that liest there so still,
I go now till to-morrow's sun ;
The autumn evening gathers chill,
The day is well-nigh done.
Sleep, dear, through all thy long un-
troubled night,
Sleep calmly till the Light !

SCENE II.

What ? Can a second springtide burst,
As happy as the first,
From out the midst of dark autumnal
days ?

And can the dead roots start ?
And can the withered heart
Rise upward from despair to joy and
praise ?

Yes, though with thrills of almost pain,
They can, again.

For as I turned yesterday, sad and
slow,
From where my darling lies below,
Fulfilled with sad sweet thoughts of the
things that have been,
I saw my dear father's kindly face,
As he came to meet me with hurried
pace,

And a grave smile that told me the
news that he bore was good ;
But he slackened his steps when he saw
me, and calmed his mood.
And I said, "Tell me all." And he
answered, "Tis well, my dear.
He was faithful ; I knew it, and is, for
his letter is here,"

And he drew it forth ; and I knew that
the writer was he,
And the title was that which he bears,
and 'twas meant for me.

Then my father kissed my forehead and
left me alone,
And I sat down to read what he said
on a graveyard stone.

My love ! He too had been ill, for a
chill he caught
When the Earl lay dying abroad, well-
nigh brought him to nought ;

Growing to fevered heats and a wandering brain,
Till he raved for his nurse of last year
to soothe him again ;
And when, after many days, he had risen to find
The wife he was forced to leave, with unquiet mind,
He found me not, but they said I had gone to my home.
And so, with loving regards, he promised to come,
Almost ere his letter could reach me.
Oh, love ! oh, my dear !
I shall see you again, though 'tis late :
and, meanwhile, a great fear
Rises up lest you grieve for your child
whom you never have seen.

SCENE III.

He has come, he has been ;
I have kissed him again and again.
Ah, God ! but it is hard to die,
For it was not he was to blame at all,
but I.
It was I, with my coward distrust and unreasoning fear,
Who could not put faith in my love,
but shrank back from a sneer.
I am glad he was true throughout,
though my sentence of doom
Sounds clear as I lie alone in my own white room.

To-day was a happy day,
When, upon my husband's breast,
I leant beside the grassy mound
Where our firstborn lies at rest.

And we mutely went again
By the dear old paths once more,
And I half forgot my sorrow
And the world was as before.

And he spoke with cheering words
Of the time when I should come
To cherish other children
In his old ancestral home.

Oh, my love as true as steel,
With your comfort kindly meant,
I would not seek to shadow
The light of your content ;

But a hundred signs assure me,
Signs indefinite yet strong,
That my fate is wholly written
And I linger not for long.

Dearest, let us cling together,
Heart to heart and eye to eye ;
Let us be together living,
And I shall not fear to die.

SCENE IV.—HENRY.

This is the last time that I tread
These unforgotten ways,
For to-morrow we follow the swallow
over the wave.
We have spent our Mays ;
Chill autumn has come and found us
bent over a grave,
The grave of our youthful love and the
hopes that are dead.

My dear, she is very pale and worn,
Save the brilliant spot that flushes on
either cheek ;

She recalls no longer the breezes and
freshness of morn
As she leans upon me, slow and weak ;
But I trust the warm summer sun and
the honeyed air,
And the daily sights and sounds of
things that are fair,
May rouse her and lighten her load of
care.
Dear child ! to think of her pining
alone,
While I lay longing for her and too
weak to write,
And afraid to disclose by a look or a
tone
The thing which discovered had wrecked
us quite !
Ah, me ! 'twas a wretched time ; and
now it is done,
My father is gone and my son, and I
only remain,
Weak in frame, with a fading wife and
a burden of pain.
Dear soul, I will do what by love and
by gold can be done ;
I will bask with you safe from chill in
the southern sun ;
And I pray that when summer returns
and the meadows grow green,
You may sit in my stately home, as
happy and proud as a queen.

But, oh ! what a fear is there
I dare not speak,
As I see the crimson deepen
On the pale wan cheek.
Nay, love, you are more lovely so,
A thousand times more fair,
Than when, twelve little months ago,
You went so free from care.
More dear you are, my love, and sweet,
A thousand times more dear,
Than when my heart forgot to beat

In the springtime of the year.
A thousand times more dear, my love,
A thousand times more dear,
For the tender pity that you move
And the anxious boding fear.

To-morrow, may it be
A new existence that we twain shall
prove
Upon the western sea,
Bound for some happier land of health
and love.

New hopes, new fears, new pains,
New joys ; our hearts are ready, and
we trust
The Omnipotent Will that reiges
Lifts not our hopes to dash them in the
dust.

We hope ; we cannot tell ;
We go together alone, forgetting all ;
For love, it shall be well,
Though life, a waning fire, may sink
and fall.

Yet, if a prayer may move
Thy dread decrees, Omnipotent Will,
Spare, spare my innocent love
To my fond gaze a little longer still.

SCENE V.—GWEN.

Here is a calm bright day,
And my husband's tender voice ;
He has climbed up from the village,
And I struggle to rejoice.

For I feel that to sorrow longer
For the little one who has fled,

My angel who rejoices
Among the blessed dead,

Were a morbid grief, displeasing
To the Lord of joy and pain.
Nay, I will not sorrow longer ;
I will strive to live again.

To the beautiful far countries
Where the soft unsailing sun
Beams cloudless through the winter,
And the flowers are never done,

He will take me, undelaying,
None beside us, only me,
By the ship that leaves to-morrow
The great city on the sea ;

Every morning growing milder,
As we southward wing our way,
Till our swift ship casts her anchor
In some blue unruffled bay.

Stately cities I have read of,
Naples, Rome in all her pride -
I shall see them, a great lady,
With my husband at my side.

I shall see them when returning
From the sacred stream of Nile,
From vast tombs of unknown rulers,
And the Sphinx's changeless smile.

I shall see them. But in springtime,
When the bitter east is done,
I shall greet these dear old mountains
Shining in the sober sun ;

I shall see my father smiling ;
I shall bend once more again
O'er my sleeper's flower-strewed cradle,
Mingling tender hope with pain.

I shall come, though, maybe sooner,
When I shall not see nor hear ;
For my love has given his promise
I shall rest beside my dear.

Farewell, oh dear, dear hills !
I do not know if I shall see you more.
Farewell ! 'tis set of sun, the night is
near,
Farewell ! Below, the mist of autumn
fills
The sleeping vale with winding vapours
strew,
And hides from sight the yellow woods
and sere.

But on the heights the day's declining
fire
Bathes all the summits in a haze of gold.
Not yet the cold mist, stealing high and
higher,
Touches the purple glow with fingers
cold ;
Not yet the ruddy light from out the
sky
Goes, nor the orange shadows fade and
die.

Here, far above the grave of dying day,
The clear night comes, and hills and
vales grow dark.

But soon the first faint star, a lucid spark,
Glimmers ; and, lo ! the ineffable array !
A myriad suns for one ! strange suns
and far,
The hidden homes where blessed spirits
are !

Oh ! night of Being, like the night of
day,
How should I fear because your shadows
fall ?

Who knows from what fresh glories thy
dark pall
For failing vision lifts the veil away?
What boundless spiritual orbits rise
Before the inward gaze of dying eyes?

Farewell, oh little grave,
Wherein I leave my buried heart awhile!
Thick yew, protect it well until I come;
Shelter it; let not winds of winter rave,
Nor sharp frosts fret nor snows, nor
floods defile.
Here is my heart, and here my waiting
home.
Farewell! farewell!

ACT VI.

SCENE I.—HENRY.

The sweet cold air of these untrodden
hills
Breathes gently. Five and twenty years
have gone
Since here my father trod, young, high
in hope,
With all the world before him; nor as yet
The slow-consuming fire of deep decay
Had sapped his youthful hope, and left
his life
To drag along its crippled journey, spent
In southern lands, wherever the chill
east
Might come not; year by year: and
last of all,
Since I have grown from boyhood,
visiting
His country never; cut off and divorced
From all the joys that make existence
sweet
the aspiring great—the fame of
men—

The name which every morning's broad-
sheet takes
To the eyes and hearts of millions—all
the thirst
For the statesman's high career rated,
and lost
In a strange lethargy which bound him
fast
To an inglorious ease. And yet I know,
A time there was when the more gene-
rous part
Allured his growing soul. For I have
found
Among his papers, time-stained notes
which tell
Of deeper studies far than I have dreamt
of;
Of high hopes and ambitions; such as
fire
Those who, as he and I, are placed by
Fate
On such high vantage that to will alone
And labour is enough, and each ap-
proach
Of honour, the Senate itself, which
opens not
To lower birth until slow-creeping age
Derides the folly, flings back early
doors
To their unbroken youth. These have
I found.
And, oh most strange of all! close
manuscripts
Of sceptical themes—my father's, his
who was, *Of all men I have known, most rapt by
faith
And very full of Godhead—doubts and
fears
And anxious questionings, changed yet
the same,
Differing in form alone from those which
now

At our own Oxford echo through old rooms
 Filled with young heated disputants, whose minds
 Seize with a frolic eagerness the doubts
 Which have perplexed all time. All these I found—
 Ah, life is wonderful! We are the sport
 Of great laws swinging slowly through an arc
 Immeasurably vast. We doubt our doubts,
 We hug our faiths, and fancy we are free
 Who are shut fast of Time.
 What power it was
 Froze fast his life I know not, but sometimes
 I think there must have come upon his life
 Some overpowering passion, some young love
 Such as the poets feign, for some young heart,
 Which held him back and clogged him.
 Yet I know—
 I would stake my life upon it—naught of wrong
 Came nigh him. Only hardly love it was
 That bound him to our mother—the high dame
 He spoke of seldom, mourned seldom still,
 Whom scarcely I recall; whose clear cold face
 Looks from beneath its coronet in my hall,
 Statelier than any of our line. Poor mother!
 She left us early—me and little Gwen;
 Gwen, whom men know as Lady Gwendoline,

Our father's darling, who now comes with me
 When hither, after years of exile spent
 From home and homely scenes, we turn and leave
 The turmoil of the Season and the chase
 Of selfish worldlings, eager to secure
 Those who are rich or fair.
 I had found of late,
 Mention among his letters here and there
 Of this Welsh village, where, when he was young,
 He spent a summer. So we left behind
 The senseless whirl, and now a week or more
 In this unclouded weather, bright and fair,
 Have wandered careless o'er these purple hills,
 Where once our father, older scarce than I,
 Roved in that far-off summer. We have kept
 Our name and rank a secret, and are free
 To come and go at pleasure, as did he, Dear father, years ago. Ah! sweet and strange,
 The cycle of a life which turns and turns
 Round to the self-same spot, changed yet the same;
 The same but for the mystic beat of Time;
 The same but for the ineffable change of Being,
 Which in the same life, grown another, works
 Infinite depths of change.
 Somehow—I know not if aught it be but fancy—but I think

The secret of his life, if such there were,
Lies hid within these hills ; and I remember
That day, when he was dying and his breath
Came feebler even than wont—the un-ruffled sea
Was sapphire, and the orange-groves behind
Showed flecked with gold—we heard a far-off bell
Call from the campanile on the hill.
And then he roused himself : " Hark ! 'tis the bell—
From the dear church-tower on the hill above—
They both are there—'tis a fair spot—the path
Is steep from out the village, but the air is balmy—'tis the well-remembered bell—
They are singing now in Welsh, and the sound soothes
The sleepers by the yew."

And now they tell me
There is indeed a church on yonder hill,
A little church half hidden by dark yews,
Which looks upon the long green vale and scans
The ever-winding river. So my sister, Who learnt in Italy the sketcher's art, Has gone before, armed with all fit devices
To snare the fleeting landscape. It is time
To join her. I must hasten ; it may be (She is not strong, dear sister, but soon tires)
She tires of sketching and awaits me. Father,

I would that you were with us, and might breathe
This sweet cold air again as young as I.

SCENE II.—GWEN.

How fair and fresh from this gray churchyard shows
The rich green vale beneath. Upon the deep
Lush meadows, where the black herds grazing seem
Like rooks upon the grass, a silvery gleam,
Now lost and now discovered, marks the place
Where winds the brimming river. Here, thick woods
Of oak and beech upon the sloping banks
Bend to the shadowy stream which glides beneath.
There, through the emerald meads, shallow or deep,
It hastens or loiters, till the tall dark elms, Grouped by the distance, hide it. And above,
On either hand the eternal mountains rise,
Pine-clad below, upon whose upper heights
The unscented heather purples. All the sky
Is flecked with soft white fleecy clouds which cast
Bewildering charms of shadow ; and beyond,
A shining sapphire drawn 'twixt earth and sky,
Glitters the summer sea. Most beautiful

'Thou art, oh motherland, which I
have known
As yet so little. Beautiful art thou
My second mother, sunny Italy,
Where the blue heaven is brighter, and
the sea
Gives back a clearer azure. But for me
There grows a tenderer charm from
these green fields
And purple hills and white-sleeked
skies, denied
To thy more brilliant landscape. Per-
haps it is
In part because my father loved them
well,
Dear father whom I loved, and who
loved me
Closer than might a mother.

Well! enough!
I will draw no more to-day, but let the
scene
Sink on my soul, and fix itself, and
breed
Fresh scenes of beauty to inspire my
hand
When the short days are dull, and all
the sky
A gloomy pall, and gusts of wintry
rain
Beat on the darkling city.

I will muse
A little till my brother comes, and
think
How good he was whose memory
brings us here;
How careless of himself, how prompt
to give
Whatever good a father's hand can
give
To his motherless girl. I scarcely had
a thought
He did not share, and as I think,
indeed,

He kept no secret from his earliest years
Of which I knew not. He has told me
all—
His studious youth, his feeble health,
the doubt
Of God and man which for a while
obscured
His noble brain and left it impotent—
And somehow it was here, upon these
hills,
From out this very spot, it may be,
gazing
On all the loveliness of earth and sky
And silver sea, the waters of his soul
Were loosed, and flowed onward strong
and clear,
To join the Infinite Deep!
There comes a cloud
Upon the sky and gusts of sudden
wind;
The beauty fades, as treacherous as
youth,
And fleeting, and I thought I heard a
roll
Of thunder drawing near. I would my
brother
Were come. I am afraid. The church
is closed—
It is not here as 'tis in Italy,
Where all who choose may kneel as
welcome guests
Within God's House; but yon thick
yew that stands
Above that gleaming cross will shelter
me
From heavier storms than this.
Here I am safe.
See with what tender care some loving
hand
Keeps green the sward, and sets it round
with flowers
That bloom as in a garden! One red
rose

Twines round the cross, and sheds in
this rude wind
Its crimson petals. Two graves stretch
beneath,
And three sleep under. Ah ! 'tis the
old vicar's
Who lived here forty years and died
last year.
" ALSO"—ah, see my brother comes at
last—
" ALSO OF"—strange, almost my name
—Gwenllian,
His daughter, who died aged
TWENTY YEARS".
The year?—one year before my father's
marriage—
Ah me ! these two were parted long,
long years !
" COUNTESS OF"—What is this ? My
father's title !
Father, what means it ?—" AND HER
INFANT SON
HENRY, LORD"—What, my brother's ?
What is this ?
It is strange. Quick ! I am faint-
ing . . .
Henry ! Henry !

EPILOGUE.

The silent Forces of the World,
Time, Change, and Fate, deride us
still ;
Nor ever from the hidden summit,
furled,
Where sits the Eternal Will,
The clouds of Pain and Error rise
Before our straining eyes.

It is to-day as 'twas before,
From the far days when Man began to
speak,

Ere Moses preached or Homer sung,
Ere Buddha's musing thought or Plato's
silvery tongue.
We pace our destined path with failing
footsteps weak ;
A little more we see, a little more
Of that great orb which shineth day and
night
Through the high heaven, now hidden,
now too bright,
The Sun to which the earth on which
we are,
Life's labouring world, is as the feeblest
star.

Nor this firm globe we know
Which lies beneath our feet ;
Not by what grades we have grown and
yet shall grow,
Through chains of miracle, more and
more complete ;
By what decrees the watery earth
Compacted grew the womb of countless
birth ;
Nor, when the failing breath
Is taken by the frozen lips of Death,
Whither the Spoiler, fleeing with his
prey,
The fluttering, wandering Wonder bears
away.

The powers of Pain and Wrong,
Immeasurably strong,
Assail our souls, and chill with common
doubt
Clear brain and heart devout :
War, Pestilence, and Famine, as of old,
The lust of the flesh, the baser lust of
gold,
Vex us and harm us still ;
Fire comes, and crash and wreck, and
lives are shed
As if the Eternal Will itself were dead ;

And sometimes Wrong and Right, the thing we fear,
The thing we cherish, draw confusedly near ;
We know not which to choose, we cannot separate
Our longing and our hate.

But Love the Conqueror, Love, Immortal Love,
Through the high heaven doth move,
Spurning the brute earth with his purple wings,
And from the great Sun brings
Some radiant beam to light the House of Life,
Uplifts our grosser thought, and makes us pure ;
And to a Higher Purpose doth mature

Our trivial days, and calms the ignoble strife,
Raises the waning life with his sweet breath,
And from the arms of Death
Soars with it to the eternal shore,
Where sight or thought of evil comes no more.

Love sitteth now above,
Enthroned in glory,
And yet hath deigned to move
Through life's sad story.
Fair Name, we are only thine !
Thou only art divine !
Be with us to the end, for there is none
But thou to bind together God and Man in one !

THE ODE OF LIFE.

THE ODE OF CREATION.

A DARK and boundless deep,
And a blind height above,
Untrodden fields of sleep,
Wherein no force may move,
Where every sound is still,
Nor breathes a living breath ;—
These are the heights, these are the depths, these are the voids of Death.

But slowly on the lifeless plain
There wakes a far-sent ray, a little star,
A tiny spark of Being from afar,
A throb of precious pain.

It is done, it has been, it has risen, the glimmer of Life,

The dark void withdrawing around,
It breaks with a whisper of sound,
Through the wastes of silence and sleep,
There is no more stillness nor Death,
The great Universe wakes with a deep-drawn singultant breath.

The great orbs cohere and spin on their measureless ways—

—The great suns awaken and shine,
ringed with girdles of fire every one—

All the worlds are on fire and ablaze—
The flaming globes circle and whirl each one round its sun

—The hot seas seethe and bellow—
 the fixed hills glow—
And the blast of Creation burns fierce
 while the centuries grow;
And Life and Time have begun !

Myriads on myriads of years !
Or was there indeed no time except
 in the Infinite Mind ?
And was there indeed no ceaseless
 circling of spheres ?
Since no sentient eye might mark the
 peripheries wind,
And at length the great Life of the
 worlds grown concentrate would
 thrill
Through some lowly speck of matter,
 which, waxing apart,
Grew conscious by slow degrees, and
 blossomed in Will ;
Weak centres of Force, which floated
 as motes in a beam,
Automatic, contracting, expanding, but
 consciousless yet.
Till a stronger force working within
 them would raise them once more,
Pushing with inchoate sin as if with an
 oar
Afloat on the slow warm stream ;
And another Creation has come and a
 new-begun strife,
With this primal glimmer of life.

Myriads on myriads of years ! if Time
 there were yet,
When no soul was by to remember or
 to forget ;
The sin growing stronger, and changing
 to wing or to claw,
Struggle on struggle, sentience, con-
 sciousness, ravin, and pain,
Monstrous and mailed forms in the
 ozone, or hurtling thro' air,

Waging through eons of time the in-
 effable struggles which gain
Order thro' waste and thro' wear.
Till the mastodon stalks forth in might
 with hoof and with jaw,
And the law of the Higher prevails, the
 Ultimate Law,
And the cooler earth teems with life, on
 land and in sea :
Life organic in beast, fish, or bird, in
 herb or in tree,
Life dominant, life exulting with quick-
 coming breath,
Life that fades down and sinks in the
 silence and slumber of Death.
But no soul to mark the struggle nor
 thought which might turn
To whence those weird fires burn.
Successions, progressions, a scheme of
 insensible life,
One Will alone directing the infinite
 strife,
One Force, one Eye, one Sole and
 Regarding Mind,
In a Universe deaf and blind !

And was it some Inner Law,
Some hidden polemey of Force,
Or some creative breath Divine,
Which sped the creature on its upward
 course ?
Until at last it woke and saw,
With visual forces fine,
The Godhead that was round it every-
 where,
The spiritual essence fair,
Which doth innervate this outward show
 of things—
And filled the brute with high imagin-
 ings,
And winging it with new-found wings
Listed its aspect to the infinite sky,
Where, in the Light of the Creative Eye

Its ancient slough away it cast,
And rose to Man at last !

How know we or can trace
The first beginnings of all Time,
Who know not yet indeed how this our
race

Rises to heights sublime?
In darkness does our life begin,
Hidden and fenced within.
In darkness and obscurity
Dwell the blind germs which yet shall
be.

In darkness the slow rolling months
fulfil
The pre-ordained will.
And even in childhood's earliest days,
No memory-haunted ways
Take our first footsteps; but in deep
And unremembered tracts of sleep
The immature creature dwells, nor can
recall

Its former self or primal state at all.

THE ODE OF INFANCY.

Oh, little child !
Stretched on thy mother's knees, with
steadfast gaze
And innocent aspect mild,
Viewing this novel scene in mute amaze,
Following the moving light, thy
mother's smile,
And storing up the while
New precious knowledge till thou
com'st to be
Sage it may be or clown—
Soaring or sinking down,
To topmost heights of weal or depths of
misery ;
How shall I dare to mark thy innocent
look,

And write as in a book
Thy infinite possibilities of life ;
What fate awaits thee in the coming
strife,
What joys, what triumphs in the grow-
ing years,
What depths of woe and tears ?

I see thee lie
Safe in thy silken cradle, sunk in down,
Within thy father's palace-chambers
fair :
Thy guarded slumbers breathing tem-
pered air ;
The soft eyes, full of yearning, watch-
ing by ;
Careless arms waiting thy waking cry ;
All luxury and state which can assuage
Life's painful heritage ;
The prayers of a people swell for thee
Up to the careless skies which cover all.
And yet it may be thine to fall
Far from thy loved and native land,
And end thy imperfect, innocent life-
tale here,
Forsaken on a savage desert strand,
Pierced through and through by some
barbarian spear.

I see thy tiny face
Pale, worn with hunger, and large
hollow eyes,
Upon the frozen way-side laid
Stiffening in thy dead mother's cold
embrace.
I hear thy piteous cries
When the sot flings thee down with
limbs that bleed—
Flings thee, and takes no heed ;
Weak, helpless, born to misery, girt
round
With vice and sin and shame, in sight
and sound.

Poor life foredoomed, already sunk and lost ;	And dull content, and soulless hopes and fears.
Too often sent to tread the ways of death	Wherever thou mayest be, To me thou art wonderful and strange to see—
With childish failing breath : Yet oftentimes holding power	Busied with trifles, rapt with simple joys, As men with graver joys.
To bloom a virgin flower	I hear thy lisping accents slowly reach The miracle of speech ;
Upon the untrodden heights closed to the multitude,	I mark thy innocent smile ;
Among the wise and good.	I treasure up each baby wile Which smooths the brow of thought, the front of care.
Or with brown face thou comest and limb,	Thou royal scion, born to be the heir Of all the unrecorded days, since first Man rose to his full being, once blest, and then accurst !
Naked, on the warm soil that bears the palm ;	In weal and woe and ill Thou art a miracle still.
Or haply the young heir of all the dim And half-forgotten realms whose ruins stand	From snow-bound hut to equatorial strand,
Sown lion-haunted on the deathlike calm Which wraps the Egyptian or Assyrian sand,	Above thee still regarding angels stand ; While thy brief life-tale fleeteth like a dream
Reared 'midst the dust of empires ; or art now	Across Creation's glass.
As through all history thou wert, the child	Dark powers of ill press thee on either side,
Of savage parents, rude and wild, Springing and falling ; born to flower and seed,	As now thy swift years pass, Revealing on the young soul's tablets white
Or sink upon the uncaring earth, a weed Trodden by the pitiless feet of cruel men	The eternal characters of Right ; Or sometimes with the growing years grown strong
With hearts that ape the tiger's ; or art born	The unhallowed signs of wrong.
In the old, old empire, which hath long outworn	Oh, little child ! thou bringest with thee still,
God and the hopes of man, and yet coheres,	As Moses, parting from the fiery hill,
Propped by its own far-reaching bulk, as when	Some dim reflection in thine eyes, Some sense of Godhead, some indefinite wonder
It did emerge from savagery and grew,	
Oh, child ! as yet may you,	
To worldly strength, and knowledge,	
And dead lore	
Of wisdom fled before,	

As of one drifted here unwillingly ;
 Who knows no speech of ours, and yet
 doth keep
 Some dumb remembrance of a gracious
 home
 Which lights his waking hours and fills
 his sleep
 With precious visions which unbidden
 come ;
 Some golden link which nought of earth
 can sunder,
 Some glimpse of a more glorious land
 and sea !

Oh, precious vision fleeting past !
 Oh, age too fair to last !
 For soon new gifts and powers are
 thine,
 And growing springs and summers
 bring
 Boyhood or girlhood hastening,
 And nerve the agile limb, and teach,
 With the new gift of speech,
 The wonders that stand round on every
 side,
 And Life's imperial portals opening
 gradually wide.

THE ODE OF CHILDHOOD.

L. BOYHOOD.

FAIR budding age,
 Which next upon life's stage
 Passest a fairy dream before the eyes,
 High health and bounding limb,
 Eager and stretching towards the
 wished-for prize ;
 Whate'er the passing care that takes
 thy thought,
 I catch the sweet brisk scent of trodden
 grass
 When through the golden afternoon

Of a long day in June,
 Until the twilight dim,
 The playfield echoes with the joyous
 noise
 Of troops of agile boys,
 Who, bare-armed, throw the rapid-
 bounding ball ;
 Who shout and race and fall.
 I see the warm pool fringed with
 meadow-sweet,
 Where stream in summer, with eager
 feet
 Through gold of buttercups and crested
 grass
 The gay processions stripping as they
 pass.
 I hear the cool and glassy depths
 divide
 As the bold fair young bodies, far more
 fair
 Than ever sculptured Nereids were,
 Plunge fearless down, or push, with
 front or side,
 Through the caressing wave.
 I mark the deadly chill, thro' the young
 blood,
 When some young life, snatched from
 the cruel flood,
 Looks once upon the flowers, the fields,
 the sun,—
 Looks once, and then is done !
 Or the grey, frosty field, and the great
 ball
 Urged on by flying feet.
 Or when the skate rings on the frozen
 lake,
 The gliding phantoms fleet,
 Rosy with health, and laughing though
 they fall.
 Or by the rapid stream or swirling
 pool,
 The fisher, with his pliant wand.
 Or by the covert-side, taking his stand,

The shooter, watching patient hour by hour,
With that hard youthful heart that young breasts hold,
Till the fur glances through the brake :
As when our savage sires wandered of old,
Hungering through primal wastes. I see them all,
The brisk, swift days of youth, which cares for nought
But for the joy of living ; scarce a thought
Of Love, or Knowledge, or at best Such labour as gives zest
To the great joy of living. Oh, blest time !
For which each passing hour rings out a chime
Of joy-bells all the year : ay, tho' through days
Of ill thou fares, and unhappy ways ;
Or whether on the sun-struck lands thy feet
Are the young savage hunter's, lithe and fleet,
Turning at night-fall to thy father's cot,
Bathed in the full white moonlight ; or dost stand
'Mid the hushed, plains of some forsaken land ;—
Where'er thou art, oh, boyhood ! thou art free
And fresh as the young breeze in summer born
On sun-kissed hills or on the laughing sea,
Or gay bird-music breathing of the morn,
Or some sweet rose-bud pearted with early dew,
As brief and fair as you.

II. GIRLHOOD.

Or in another channel still more sweet,
Life's current flows along,
Ere yet the tide of passion, full and strong,
Hurries the maiden's feet.
Oh, sweet and early girlish years ! Of innocent hopes and fears !
Busied with fancies bright and gay,
Which Love shall chase away,
When, with the flutter of celestial wings,
He stirs the soul forth from its depths, and brings
Healing from trouble. Oh, deep well Of fairy fancies undefiled !
Oh, sweet and innocent child !

Now with thy doll I see thee full of care,
Or filled already with the mother's air,
Hushing thy child to sleep,
And now thyself immersed in slumbers, deep
Vet light, I see thee lie.
And now the singer, lifting a clear voice
In soaring hymns or carols that rejoice,
Or busied with thy seam, or doubly fair
For the unconscious rapture of thy look
Lost in some simple book.
Whate'er the colour of thy face,
Thou art fulfilled with grace.
Oh, little maiden, fair or brown !
Thine is the simple beauty which doth crown
The dreams of happy fathers, who have past
By Love and Passion, and have come
To know pure joys of home ;
And for the hurry and haste of younger years,
Have taken the hearth that cheers,

THE ODE OF YOUTH.

And the fair realm of duty, and delight
Of innocent faces bright
And the sweet wells of deep untroubled
 love
A daughter's name can move.

In every clime and age I see thee
 still,
Since the rude nomads wandered forth
 at will
Upon the unbounded Aryan pastures
 wild--
There thou wert, oh, fair child !
"The milker" 'twas they called thee ;
 all day long
Tending the browsing herds with high-
voiced song ;
Or on some sun-warmed place
Upon the flower-faced grass,
Watching the old clouds pass,
And weaving wreaths with such wild
 grace
And sprightly girlish glee
As Proserpine did once in sunny Sicily.

Or maybe by some widowed hearth—
The fairest, saddest sight on earth,
Filled too soon with sweet care,
And bringing back the voice and air
Of thy dead mother ; thou art set
An innocent virgin-mother, childlike
 yet.
Thy baby sisters on thy loving arm
Sleep fast, secure from harm.
Thou hast no time for game or toy,
Or other thought but this ;
Finding thy full reward, thy chieftest joy,
In thy fond father's kiss.

Or under palms to-day,
Thy childhood fleets away ;
Or by the broadening shadow hid,
Of tomb or pyramid ;

In stainless whiteness : or maybe
Forlorn in haunts of misery ;
Thou keepest on thy rounded face
Some unforgotten trace
Of the old primal days unsung,
Of the fresh breezes of pure morn
When the first maiden child was born,
And Time was young.

Fair streams which run as yet
Each in its separate channel from the
 snows ;
Boyhood and girlhood ; while Life's
 banks are set
With blooms that kiss the clear lymph
 as it flows,
One swift and strong and deep,
One where the lilies sleep ;—
Fair streams, which soon some stress
 of Life and Time
Shall bring together,
Under new magical skies and the
 strange weather
Of an enchanted clime.

THE ODE OF YOUTH.

Now upon the tree of life there rise
Before our wondering eyes
Two strange new flowers of varied hue.
The tree is grown,
The flowers are blown,
There is nought wanting to its early
 sweetness ;
But with a fair completeness,
The purple bloom and white
Fill the entranced, admiring sight.
The tree is grown, the tree is strong ;
Oh ! dear to art and song !

Fair time of Flowers ! within whose
chalice sweet
Lurks Youth with rosy feet,
And Love with purple folded wing,
And birdlike thoughts that sing.

I.—EARLY MANHOOD.

And first, oh youth, I see thee with the plume
Of thy thick locks upon thy forehead set,
And thy frank eyes kindling with fire, or dim
With soaring thoughts of heaven, or wet
With kindly dews of pity ; the straight limb
And the strong arm, and force that never tires ;
The cheek and lip touched with the early down
Of manhood's fullest crown ;
The heart, which hardly thought of passion fires ;
The mind, which opens like a flower in spring
To all the wanton airs the seasons bring ;—
The young existence self-contained no longer,
But pressing outward hour by hour,
Fired with a thirst continually stronger,
For some supreme white flower.
Whatever be the prize—
Whether upon the difficult heights of Thought,
Or 'midst the white laborious dust of Duty,
Or on the peaks of Power, the bloom be sought,
Or in the flush and thrill of the new Beauty.
Born of a maiden's eyes.

Oh, happiest age of all
When hope is without measure,
And life a thrill of pleasure,
And health is high and force unspent,
Nor Disappointment yet, nor sordid Care,
Nor yet Satiety, nor the cold chill
Which creeps upon the world-worn heart to kill
All higher hope, and leaves us to despair ;
Nor doubt of God or men can touch, but all
The garden ground of Life is opened wide ;
And lo ! on every side
The flowers of spring are blooming, and the air
Is scented, and sweet song is everywhere,
And young eyes read from an enchanted book,
With rapt entranced look,
Loves legend and the Dream of days to be,
And fables fair of Life's mythology,
Through the still hours till dewy twilight fall.

Whatever be the page—
Whether of metaphysical riddles faint,
Or the rapt visions of some ancient seer,
The burning thoughts of saint,
Or maxims of the sage—
Thou comest, oh youth, with thought as sure,
With mind severe and pure ;
Thou takest afresh, with each returning year,
The fair thin dreams, the philosophic lore
Of the great names of yore—

Plato the wise, Confucius, Socrates,
The blessed Gautama—all are thine ;
Upon thee year by year the words
divine

Of our great Master, falling like the
dew,

Sway thee, to hate the wrong, to love
the true ;

For thee the fair poetic page is spread
Of the great living and the greater
dead ;

For thee the glorious gains of Science lie
Stretched open to thine eye ;
And to thy fresh and undimmed brain,
The mysteries of Number and of Space
Seem easy to explain ;
Thou lookest with clear gaze upon the
long.

Confusions of the Race, the paradox of
Wrong ;

And dost not fear to trace,
With youth's strong fiery faith that
knows no chill,
The secret of Transgression, the prime
source
Of Good and Evil, and the unfailing
course
Of the Ineffable Will.

And sometimes life, glowing with too
fierce fire,
O'er sea and land in rapid chase,
Snatches thee with tumultuous will,
And careless, breathless pace.
Sometimes a darker thought
Comes on thee as a shadow of night,
Marring thy young life's white,
And some new longing in the past
untaught,

And at thy side shamefast Desire
Stands unreproved and guides thy bash-
ful feet

To where, girt by dim depths of solitude,

Sits Fancy, disarrayed, in a deep wood ;
And ah, but Youth runs swift and
Pleasure is sweet !

And sometimes, too, looking with too
bold eye

Upon the unclouded sky,
Sudden the heavens are hidden, and
the great Sun

Sinks as if day were done,
And the brain reels and all the life
grows faint,

Smitten by too much light ; or a thick
haze

Born out of sense doth overcloud
The soul, and leaves it blind and in
amaze,

And the young heart is dull and the
young brain

Dark till God shine again.

Oh, fairest age of all !
Whate'er thy race or clime,
To-day ten thousand cities on thee call,
Broad plain and palm-fringed isle.

Thine is the swelling life, the eager
glance and smile,

Oh, precious fruit of Life and Time !

Oh, worker of the world ! to whose
young arm

The brute earth yields and wrong, as
to a charm ;

Young seaman, soldier, student, toiler
at the plough,

Or loom, or forge, or mine, a kingly
growth art thou !

Where'er thou art, though earthy oft
and coarse,

Thou bearest with thee hidden springs
of force,

Creative power, the flower, the fruitful
strife,

The germ, the potency of Life.

Which draws all things to thee unwittingly.

The Future lies within thy loins, and
all the Days to be
To thee Time giveth to beget,
The Thought that shall redeem and
lift Man higher yet.

II. MAIDENHOOD.

But lo ! another form appears
Upon Life's glass. Oh, pure and
white !

Oh, delicate and bright !
Oh, primal growth of Time !
Sweet maidenhood ! that to a silvery
chime

Of music, and chaste fancies undefiled,
And modest grace and mild,
Comest, best gift of God to men,
As fair to-day as when
The first man, waking from his deep
And fancy-haunted sleep,
Found his strength spent, and at his
side

His fair dream glorified ;
High-soaring note, leading harmonious
song

Through secular discords long.
Oh, lily of Life's garden ! fair of hue
And sweet of scent, watered with
heaven's own dew ;

Fair being, holding hidden motherhood
And undeveloped good ;

Implicit in thee, even as white blooms
hold

Their fragrant globes of gold,
Men know no praise they can withhold
from thee,

Oh, sweet virginity !
Since Artemis first trod the youngling
earth.

Thou glorious and surpassing birth !

The Vestal fires were thine, the convents
cold

Are thine as those of old,
To thee, when strong sweet flowers of
Life and Sense,
Scent gross, we turn, oh white and
gracious innocence !

Yea, still, while life flows fast and free,
To thee we turn a world-worn eye.

Throbbing delights are youth's and
pulses high ;
Yet these at last will ebb, and then
to thee
We turn, oh fair pale lily, clothed with
purity !

For sure it is indeed
Two streams through Life's ground flow,
and both are good—

The one whose goal is gracious mother-
hood ;

The other in the cloister pale and dim
Finding sufficient meed
In pure observance, rite, and soaring
hymn.

We may not blame nor hold them wrong
Who through their lives their liturgies
prolong,

Even though the prize of motherhood
be great.

But always thine, oh, blest estate !
Thine it is, under youth's hot sun, to
keep

Celestial snows and pure abysses deep.

I see thy fair expanding mind,
A precious blossom parcel-blown,
Not with the young man's noble rage,
But with a gentler radiance all thy own,
Fixed now on history's fabled page,
Now on the bard's diviner thought,
And now by some deep music stirred,

Deeper than any spoken word,
Or sweet love-story soft as southern
wind.

Dear flower and fair to mortal eye,
Whatever be thy age, thy clime, thy race,
Whether the gentle curve of thy young
breast

Be hidden in white lawn or stand confess'd
In innocent brown nakedness and grace,
Thou art the high and unattain'd prize
Of all the generations that have been ;
Upon Life's throne thou sittest as a
Queen,
And at thy gracious feet
The ages kneel to thy eternal Truth.
Thy pure and spotless innocence,
And free from stain of Time and Sense,
Thy undefiled youth.

White flower of Life's tree,
Love like a wanton bee,
Shall fly to thee, and from thy deep
cold cells
Rifle the honey. Tranquil stream,
That from the chill heart of the un-
trodden snow,
So calm and clear dost flow ;
Spring wakes beneath the gleam
Of a new sun which swells
A warm and rapid torrent strong,
Soon in the sunny balmy weather,
To break its banks and bear together
Your mingled streams along.

THE ODE OF LOVE.

I AM afraid
To sing thee, oh Immortal Love, who
know
By what majestic voices long ago
Thy eulogy was said.

I do not dare
To bring a voice which thou didst never
train,
To the high-soaring difficult air
Of thy celestial strain.
Yet how of Life to sing, and yet not
tell of Love ;
And since thou art the source of song,
And all our hearts dost move,
I will essay thy praise nor fear to do
thee wrong.

For see, the lovers go
With lingering steps and slow,
By dim arcades where sunbeams scarcely
reach ;
On sea-struck northern beach ;
Or breathless tropic strand,
By evening breezes fanned ;
Or through the thick life-laden air
Of some great city ; or through the
hush
Of summer twilights 'midst the corn ;
When all the dying heavens glow and
blush
Or the young moonlight curves its
crescent horn.

Oh, wondrous bond that binds
In one sweet concord separate minds,
And from their union gives
To the rapt gazer's eye
A finer essence and more high,
A young and wing'd God, who lives
In purer air and seeks a loftier sky !
If growing cares and lower aims should
banish
All thought of heavenly hopes and
higher things,
While we can mount upon thy soaring
wings
They shall not wholly vanish.

Thou art the immortal part of man, the
soul,

Which, scorning earth's control,
Lifts us from selfish thought and grovel-
ling gains.

Thou always, whilst thy power remains,
Canst pierce the dull dead weight of
cloud,

By which our thought is bowed,
And raise our clear and cleansèd eyes
To the eternal skies.

No sting of sense it is
That gives thee wing and lifts thee up
to heaven.

Too high art thou for this ;
Ethereal, pure, free from earth's grosser
leaven.

If ought of sense be thine, 'tis but the air,
Whose weight can lift thee up to soar,
Which can thy heavenward pinions bear
From brute earth more and more
Up to the fount of Power and Love
Whence all things move.

And see, the lovers go
With lingering steps and slow,
Over all the world together, all in all,
Over all the world ! Great empires fall ;
The onward march of Man seems spent ;
The nations rot in dull content ;
The blight of war, a bitter flood,
From continent to continent,
Surges in waves of blood ;
The light of knowledge sinks, the fire
of thought burns low ;
There seems scant thought of God ; but
yet
One power there is men ne'er forget,
And still through every land beneath
the skies,

Rapt, careless, looking in each other's
eyes,

With lingering steps and slow,
The lovers go.

A pillar of light
Goes evermore before their dazzled eyes.
Purple and golden-bright,
Yon'th's vast horizons spread and the
unbounded skies.

Oh blessed dream which for awhile dost
hide
The sorrows of the world and leave life
glorified,

Oh blessed light that risest still,
Young eyes and souls to fill !

Linked arms and hearts aglow ;
Wherever man is more than brute,
To this self-sacrifice our natures grow.
Rapt each in each they go, and mute,
Listening to the sweet song
Which Love, with mystic accents, all
day long

Sing to them, like a hidden bird,
Sweeter than e'er was seen or heard,
Which from life's thick-leaved tree
Sings sadly, merrily,
A strange, mixed, song, a changeful
strain,

Which rises now to joy and jollity,
Now seemeth to complain ;
But with a sweeter music far than is
Of earthborn melodies.

He sees within her eyes
That which his nature needs to be com-
plete—
The grace, the pureness, the divine sweet,
Which to rude souls and strong our Life
denies ;
The vision of his nightly dream ;
More pure than e'er did seem
The Nymphs of old, by wood, or hill,
or stream.

She views in him the strong
Deep note which adds the fulness to
life's song ;

High aims and thoughts that glow
She does not dream, she cannot know
What turbid forces rude and wild
Sully his youth's tumultuous flow ;
She, full of virgin fancies, pale and mild.

They draw to each other, they flow to
the deep as one,
Together thro' all lands beneath the sun,
In twin attempered streams, set side by
side,
So near that scarce a footpace may divide
Their separate depths, and this maybe
is best ;
Or maybe in each other lost,
In calm or tempest-tost,
One broad full river they roll on to the
sea,
One full accordant harmony,
High song and deep, one perfect note ;
Or maybe troublous as the wintry wave,
Or some hoarse accent of a tuneless
throat,
They know no longer peace or rest,
Ill-mated, hapless, self-opprest,
Till silent in the grave.

Yet draw together, draw together still,
Fair souls and free, fair souls and young !
Still shall thy praise, Immortal Love,
be sung !
Thou art the Spirit which doth animate ;
The Universal Will,
Which speeds the Race upon the ways
of Fate ;
Which speeds it onwards, gaining
strength
Little by little, line on line,
Till, as our hope is, risen at length

To plenitude Divine,
It comes to what high issue rare
The Future shall prepare.

THE ODE OF PERFECT YEARS.

Now flower and perfect fruit
Together dress the tree,
High midsummer has come, midsum-
mer mute
Of song, but rich to scent and sight.
The sun is high in heaven, the skies
are bright
And full of blessedness,
High hope and wild endeavour
Have fled or sunk for ever ;
Only the swifter seasons onward press,
And every day that goes
Is a full-scented, full-blown garden rose,
Orb'd, complete.
And every hour brings its own burden
sweet
Of daily duty, precious care ;
Wherefrom the visible landscape calm
and clear
Shows finer far, and the high heaven
more near,
Than ever morning skies of sunrise
were.

I miss the unbounded hope of old,
The freshness and the glow of youth ;
I miss the fever and the fret,
The luminous haze of gold.
I see a mind clearer and calmer yet,
A more unselfish love, a more unclouded
truth ;
Such gain I take, and this
More gracious shows and fair than that
I miss.

I. FATHERHOOD.

Oh, father ! sitting at thy hearth,
With sunny heads around and lisping
talk,
For whom the world without and all
the earth
Is nought to this ; and to the strong
deep love
Which, mixed with pity, all thy soul
doth move.
Strong worker, watching o'er the tot-
tering walk
And feeble limbs and growing thought
and brain,
Réjoicing in each new-found gain
As the first sire, alone in Paradise :
And patient and content to work all
day,
If with the eve returning from thy toil
Thou canst put off the sad world's stain
and soil,
And bending downward to thy chil-
dren's eyes,
Rise cleansed and pure as they.
I know not if life holds a more divine
Or fairer lot than thine.
Strong, patient worker, king of those
who can
To its high goal of Things to be,
Its goal of Fate and Mystery,
Lead forth the race of Man !

Thy way is oftentimes hard,
And toilsome oft thy feet ;
Thine are the days of anxious care,
When the spent brain reels, or the
strong arm tires ;
Yet all the ease and charm of days that
were,
And Pleasure paling all her fading fires,
Allure no more, but the tired hunter
now,

Or now the worker with the furrowed
brow
On frozen wastes or sun-struck thou
dost show ;
By mart, or loom, or mine, or bending
down
Chained to thy desk within the stifling
town,
Thou toilst daily that thy brood may
live.
Cares are thine, cares, and the unselfish
mind
Which spends itself for others and can
find
How blest it is without return to give.
Whate'er thy race or speech, thou art
the same ;
Before thy eyes Duty, a constant flame,
Shines always steadfast with unchang-
ing light,
Through dark days and through bright.

Sometimes, by too great misery bowed
down,
Or poison-draughts brought lower than
the beast,
Thou comest to bathe the hollow eyes
around,
Dreading thy cares increased,
And dost despise thy own,
And canst thy dead heart steel against
their cries,
And mark unmoved the hunger in their
eyes ;
Or sometimes, filled with love, art
powerless to aid.
Oh, misery, to make our souls afraid !

Or if a happier lot
Await thee, yet by precious wells of
tears
Thy life's road goes, vain hopes and
anxious fears.

Thine 'tis, perchance, to mark the
grassy mound
Which keeps, within the churchyard's
narrow ground,
Thy darling who is not.
Hopes sunk in tears, tears that ascend
to hope ;
Such is thy horoscope,
Oh father, standing by the little grave,
And impotent to save !

Thy heart is moved with pity
For thy young growing lives, who needs
must come
To leave the safe and sacred walls of
home ;
For whose young souls, Life, like a
cruel city,
Spreads out her nets of sin.
Thou knowest well of old
The strong allurements which they
scarce may shun,
The subtle wiles, the innocent lives
undone,
The tide of passion, scorning all con-
trol,
And thou art filled with an immense
despair,
Wherfrom thy heart beats slow, thy
eyes grow dim,
As when of yore thou heardst them
lisp a hymn
With early childish lips : thou canst
not bear
To think of that young whiteness soiled
and foul,
Or that thick darkness blotting the
young soul.

Yet from thy grief and pain
Comes oftentimes greater gain
Than all thy loss.
Thou knowest what it is to grieve,

And from the burden of thy cross
Thou comest to believe.
Thou who hast lost and yet dost love,
Thou, too, a Father hast in some dim
sphere above,
Who doth regard thy joys, thy miseries,
Thy petty doubts of Him, thy feeble
learning,
Thy faults, thy pains, thy childish doubt
and yearning,
Even as thou dost these.

II. MOTHERHOOD.

But here is one who over all the earth
Is worshipped and is blest,
Who doth rejoice from holier springs of
mirth,
And sorrow from a deeper fount of
tears,
On whose sweet bosom is our earliest
rest,
Whose tender voice that cheers
Is our first memory, which still doth
last
Thro' all our later past—
The love of love or child, the world-
worn strife,
The turmoil and the triumphs of a
life—
The sweet maid-mother, pure and
mild,
The deep love undefiled.

Thou art the universal praise
Of every human heart, the secret shrine
Where seer and savage keep a dream
divine
Through growing and declining days ;
And but for thee
And thy unselfish love, thy sacrifice,
Which brings heaven daily nearer to
our eyes,

Men whom the rude world stains, men
chilled by doubt,
Would find no ray of Deity
To fire a Faith gone out.

Our life from a twofold root
Springs upwards to the sky,
One, surface only, shared with tree and
brute,
And one, as deep and strong as heaven
is high.

Spirit and sense,
Each bears its part and dwells in innocence
Yet only grown together can they bear
The one consummate fruit.
The flower is good, the flower is fair,
But holds no lasting sweetness in its
petals thin,
No seed of life within.

But the ripe fruit within its orb'd gold
Doth hidden secrets hold :
Within its honied wells set safe and
deep,
The Future lies asleep.

Of shamefastness our being is born,
Of shamefastness and scorn.

Oh, wonder, that so high dost soar !
Oh, vision, blest for evermore !
With every thro'e of birth
Two glorious Presences make glad the
earth
The stainless mother and the Eternal
Child.
Of the heart comes love, of the heart
and not the brain ;
To heights where Thought comes not
can Love attain :
We cannot tell at all, we may not
know,
How to such stature high our lower
natures grow ;

What strong instinctive thrill
The mother's being doth fill,
And raises it from miry common ways,
Up to such heights of love.
We cannot tell what blessed forces
move,
And so transform the careless girlish
heart
To bear so high a part.
We cannot tell ; we can but praise.

Fair motherhood, by every childish
tongue
Thy eulogy is sung.
In every passing age
The theme of seer and sage :
The painters saw thee in a life-long
dream ;
The painters who have left a world
more fair
Than ever days of nymph and goddess
were—
Blest company, who now for centuries
Have fixed the virgin mother for our
eyes—
The painters saw thee sitting brown or
fair,
Under the Tuscan vines or colder
Northern air ;
They saw pure love transform thy
peasant gaze ;
They saw thy reverent eyes, thy young
amaze
And left thee Queen of Heaven, wearing
a crown
Of glory ; and abased at thy sweet
breast,
Spurning his robes of kingship down,
The God-child laid at rest.

They found thee, and they fixed thee
for our eyes ;
But every day that goes

Before the gazer new Madonnas rise,
 What matter if the cheek show not the
 rose,
 Nor look divine is there nor queenly
 grace?
 The mother's glory lights the homely
 face.
 In every land beneath the circling sun
 Thy praise is never done.
 Whatever men may doubt, they put
 their trust in thee ;
 Rude souls and coarse, to whom
 virginity
 Seems a dead thing and cold,
 So always was it from the days of old ;
 So shall it be while yet our race doth
 last ;
 Though truth be sought no more and
 faith be past,
 Still, till all hope of heaven be dead,
 Thy praises shall be said.

Aye, thou art ours, or wert, ere yet
 The loss we ne'er forget,
 The loss which comes to all who reach
 life's middle way
 We see thee by the childish bed
 Sit patient all night long,
 To cool the parching lips or throbbing
 head ;
 We hear thee still with simple song
 Or sweet hymn lull the wakeful eyes
 to sleep ;
 Through every turning of life's
 chequered page,
 Joying with those who joy, weeping
 with those who weep.
 Oh, sainted love ! oh, precious
 sacrifice !
 Oh, heaven-lighted eyes !
 Best dream of early youth, best memory
 of age !

III. LABOUR.

They do the Maker wrong
 Who with the closing days of youth
 Shut fast the gate of Song ;
 Nor ever shall I hold it truth,
 With those who feign to tell the tale of
 life,
 That only love is worth, the love that
 binds
 A youth and maid, nor care at all
 For the long summer ere the fruit shall
 fall,
 And deem unfit for song the glorious
 strife,
 The joy of toil and thought, the clash
 of vigorous minds,
 When knowledge flies before and we
 pursue,
 And who the Fair once followed,
 follow now the True.

Ah, full fair life ! if something we have
 lost,
 If never more again
 We feel the ancient joy, the former pain,
 If no more passion-tost
 Upon the tides of life we hurry by,
 The white waves laughing as we plunge
 along,
 Nor watch the light clouds drift along
 the sky,
 While the glad South snatches us swift
 and strong
 To some blest isle beyond the purple
 wave,
 Where Love is Queen and Mirth, nor
 Prudence grave
 Nor Wisdom frowns, but to be glad is all,
 From jocund morn till dewy evening
 fall ;
 Oh, if that sky is dark—those winds
 are still—

Another day has risen : again from the
East
Our treasure is increased ;
And as the orient Lord begins to grow,
New airs begin to blow ;
And on the calm majestic tide,
Our full-sailed galleon comes to glide,
Love, with its little skiff, has gone,
But Life's great bark sails on.

Toil is the law of life, and its best
fruit :
This from the uncaring brute
Divides ;—this and the prescient mind
whose store
Grows daily more and more.
Toil is the mother of wealth,
The nurse of health ;
Toil 'tis that gives the zest
To well-earned rest ;
The law of life laid broad and deep
As are the fixed foundations of the sea,
The medicine of grief, the remedy,
Wherefrom Life giveth his beloved
sleep.

Oh, labour truly blest !
Thou rulest all the race ;
Over all the toiling earth I see thy
gracious face
Stand forth confess.
Wherever thou art least,
In those fair lands beneath the tropic
blaze,
The slothful savage, likened to the
beast,
Drags on his soulless length of days ;
Where most thou art,
Man rises upward to a loftier height,
And views the earth and heaven with
clearer sight,
And holds a cleaner heart.

I see the toilers with the awaking morn,
Ere yet the day is born,
Go forth to labour over all the earth.
In northern darkness, 'midst the wintry
rain,
The great bell clangs thro' the smoke-
laden air ;
And ere light comes the workers
gather there,
While the great engines throb, the
swift wheels turn,
And the long, sickly gaslights flare and
burn ;
I hear the slow winch creak above the
pit,
While the black workers, who have
toiled all night,
Rise, dazed, to rest and light ;
I see the fisher on the waking sea ;
The great ship, full-manned, heaving
silently
Across the foam ; reapers in yellow
corn ;
The frosty shepherd in the early morn ;
The naked worker bent among the
cane
Or cotton ; the vinedresser, lean and
brown ;
The thousand labours of the busy town ;
The myriad trades which in each clime
and race
Build up man's dwelling-place ;
I see the countless toiling multitude ;
And all I see is good.

But to ends nobler still
The nobler workers of the world are
best.
It is not best in an inglorious ease
To sink and dull content,
When wild revolts and hopeless
miseries
The unquiet nations fill ;

It is not best to rot
In dull observance, while the bitter cry
Of weak and friendless sufferers rends
the sky,
Wailing their hopeless lot ;
Or rest in coward fear on former gain,
Making old joys supply the present
pain.

Nay, best it is indeed
To spend ourselves upon the general
good ;
And, oft misunderstood,
To strive to lift the knees and limbs
that bleed :—
This is the best, the fullest meed.
Let ignorance assail or hatred sneer ;
Who loves his race he shall not fear ;
He suffers not for long,
Who doth his soul possess in loving,
and grows strong.

Oh, student ! far into the night
From youth to age
Bent low upon the blinding page,
Content to catch some gleam of light ;
Art thou not happy, though the world
pass by ?—
Happy though Honour seek thee not,
nor Fame,
And no man knows thy name ?—
Happy in that blest company of old
Whose names are writ in characters of
gold
Upon the rocks of Time, the glorious
band
Who on the shining mountains stand,
Thinker and jurist, bard or seer,
Whatever name is brightest and most
dear ?

Or thou with docile hand,
Obedient to the visionary eye,

Who 'midst art's precious work dost
choose to stand
Amid the great ones of the days gone
by.

Oh, blest and glorious lot, always to be
With dreams of beauty compassed
round about !

The godlike mother and the child
divine,

Or land or sea or sky, in calm or
storm,

Nature's sincerest verities of form--
To see from canvas or from marble
shine,

Little by little orb'ing gradually,
Some trace of hidden Godhead gleam-
ing out !

Or who, from heart and brain inspired,
create,

Defying time, defying fate,
Some deathless theme and high,
Some verse which cannot die,
Some lesson which shall still be said
Altho' their tongue be lost and dead ;
Or who, in daily labour's trivial round,
Their fitting work have found ;
Or who on high, guiding the car of
State,

Are set, a people's envy and their pride,
Who, spurning rank and ease and
wealth,

And setting pleasure aside and health,
And meeting contumely oft and hate,
Have lived laborious lives and all too
early died.

Or shall I silence keep
Of you, oh ministering women fair,
Who, while the world lies sunk in care-
less sleep,

Still for the love of God and men can
bear

To watch by alien sick-beds, and to guard
 With little hope and scant reward,
 Midst misery and foul infected air,
 The friendless and the dying ? Shall I dare
 To sing of labour's meed, nor hold you dear ?
 Dear souls, your joys are great, and yet not wholly here ;
 In heaven they blossom best and grow complete,
 And beautiful upon the eternal moun-
 tains are your feet.
 Ay, labour, thou art blest.
 From all the earth, thy voice, a con-
 stant prayer,
 Soars upward day and night :
 A voice of aspiration after right ;
 A voice of effort yearning for its rest ;
 A voice of high hope conquering despair !

And sabbath rest comes with the even-
 ing sun :
 The joyous shouts come up from pool or green ;
 Round the white chestnut-spikes the beetles hum ;
 And down the hawthorn-haunted by-
 ways come
 The loitering lovers, hardly seen
 Till springs alost the clear, large moon
 Of pleasant June.
 Or by the palm-thatched hut at shut of eve,
 The dusky toilers lie, when the red sun
 Is sinking or has gone.
 A cool wind rises landward from the sea ;
 The fire-flies glance like silver in the palm ;
 On the fringed shore the thundering rollers heave ;
 And all the simple souls are full of glee,
 And the fair earth of calm.

IV. REST.

There is a joy in rest ;
 There is a joy to cease and to be still.
 This is the remedy of all the best,
 To cure the pain of too laborious will.
 Ah ! it is sweet to lie reclined,
 Reaping the fallow mind,
 When all the sweat and drouth of day
 is done,
 And a cool breeze breathes from the setting sun.

The toiler sits before his cottage door,
 Set with musk-roses round, and eglan-
 tine,
 In dewy, scented, twilight-glooms divine,
 When all the trouble of the week is o'er,

Or on the hot and trackless sand,
 In the sweet dying day,
 Beyond the unknown monuments of the dead,
 The last muezzin calls, the prayers are said,
 And turbaned faces stern relax a while
 To some unwonted smile,
 Watching the large-eyed children at their play.

Or maybe busy brains, which day by day
 Life's struggle frets away,
 Weary with fierce pursuit of fame or wealth,
 And prizes only health ;
 Over the joyous wave in some swift boat,
 White-winged, delight to float
 From land to land upon the tideless sea ;
 borne careless still and free

By hoary cape and gleaming southern town,
And many an islet clothed with palm and vine,
And on the wine-dark sea-depths looking down,
High based on wave-worn fronts, the marble shrine ;
Or see the white town flush with dying day,
And the red mountain fire the glimmering bay.

Or maybe on the icy hill they creep
Above the pines, across the frozen sea,
Whose blue abysses bare the unfathomed deep :
Each to the other bound, and silently,
Fearful lest some chance step or spoken word,
The avalanche trembling downward may have stirred :
And up the giddy height
Little by little, gaining slow,
They gradually go,
Till with hard toil of knee and hand,
On the white summit panting but content,
With full hearts throbbing high and forces spent,
At last the climbers stand :
For this of old is sure,
That change of toil is toil's sufficient cure.

Or by the lovely classic shore,
The traveller sees with wondering eyes
The treasure-house of art ; the store
Of gracious memories
Left by some cunning vanished hand,
At whose supreme command
The spirit of beauty rose and did appear :
The angel with the lily : the poor maid,
Submissive, yet afraid ;

The fair Madonnas mild ;
The deep ineffable Child ;
The sweet boy-angels singing high and clear ;
The lady with the mystic smile ;
The kneeling Magi from the fabled East ;
The blessed Presence at the sacred feast ;
And many a virgin martyr sweet,
And many a youthful saint,
Gazing from heavenly eyes and free of guile ;
Who, when the tortured life began to faint,
Looking in agony above,
Saw the heavens opened, and the Paraclete
Descending like a dove.

Or maybe under secular trees
Old when his ancestors were young,
The statesman, in the golden autumn, sees
New glories for the eloquent tongue,
New triumphs gained against the banded might
Of selfishness and fear, new struggles for the right ;
And in the falling evening and the sad
Short light of waning days,
Illumes his soul with subtle inward rays,
And grows sedately glad.

These thy refreshments are, oh blest
And necessary Rest !
Peaceful delights, which bear not soil
and fret
As do the victories of toil, and yet
Bear their own fruit exceeding fair :
Renewal of the labouring mind,
New hopes, new dawns, and carking care
A black night left behind.

THE ODE OF GOOD.

ETERNAL Spring, and Source
Of happiness and weal !
Indwelling and unfailing Force !
Who dost Thyself reveal
In every jocund day, and restful night ;
In every dawn serenely bright ;
In every tide of yearning which doth roll,
Heavenward, some growing soul !

What were life save for Thee
But pain and misery --
To have no more longing, but to be
Below the brute, below the tree,
Below the little stone, or speck of dust,
Which are themselves, and are made
just,
Conforming to the law which bade them
grow,
Not dreaming dreams of heaven in their
estate so low !

The calm brutes live and are,
Tranquil and unafraid,
Keeping their nature only ; the faint
star
Pursues its orbit always though of Thee
It knows not, yet its vast periphery
Is ordered by Thy hand ; by Thee were
laid
The fixed foundations of the unfathomed
sea ;--
All these obey Thee, though they may
not know
What law it is that holds them. Man
alone
Sees Thee, and knowing Thee, averts
his face,
And yet is higher than all for his disgrace,
Which were impossible to brute, or tree,
or stone.

How shall a finite voice
Praise Thee who art too high for any
praise,
Great Scheme, that by eternal, perfect
ways
Farest and dost rejoice !
Thou wert before Life was, or ill.
Thou rulest all things still ;
The Governance and Regimen are Thine,
Oh Plenitude divine !
Of all the countless orbs that roll
Through all Thy infinite space.
We are through Thee alone, each in its
place,
Organic, Inorganic, great and small ;
Thou dost inspire and keep us all ;--
Earth, sky, and sea ; herb, tree, insect,
and brute ;
All Thy created excellences mute,
To Man of large discourse, and the un-
dying soul.

We know not by what Name our
tongues shall call
Thee or Thy Essence, nor can Thought
as yet
Gain those ineffable heights where Thou
art set,
As from a watch-tower guarding all.
Thou girdest Thyself round with mys-
tery,
As Thy great sun behind an embattled
cloud,
Or some wrapt summit, never seen ;
Yet Thy veiled presence cheers us on
our road.
With eyes bent down too much on earth
and bowed,
We toil and do forget
All but our daily labour and its load ;
Yet art Thou there the while; felt yet
unseen,

Oh universal Good, and Thy great Will
Directs our footsteps still—
Directs them, though they come to stray
From Thy appointed perfect way ;
Lights them, though for a while they
wander far,
Led by some feeble baleful star,
Which can allure them when the blind-
ing fold
Of mist is on the hill side, and the cold
Clouds which make green our lives,
descending, hide
Death's steeps on every side.

We know not what Thou art—
Whether the Word of some all-perfect
Will
Inborn and nourished in each human
heart,
Some hidden and mysterious good,
Obeyed, not understood ;
Or whether the harmonious note
(Of some world-symphony divine,
To which the perfect Scheme of things,
Ever advancing perfectly
To high fulfilment, sings.
We know not what Thou art, and yet
we love ;
We know not where Thou dwell'st, yet
still above
We turn our eyes to Thee, knowing
Thou wilt take
Our yearnings and wilt treasure them,
and make
Our little lives fulfil themselves and
Thee :
And in this trust we bear to be.

Oh Light so white and pure,
Oft clouded and yet sure !
Oh inner Radiance of the heart,
That drawest all men, whate'er Thou
art,

Spring of the soul, that dost remove
Winter with rays of love,
And dost dispel of Thy far-working
might
The clouds of Ill and Night,
For every soul which cometh to the
earth ;
That beamest on us at our birth,
And paling somewhat in life's grosser
day,
Lightest, a pillar of fire, our evening
way ;
What matter by what Name
We call Thee? - still art Thou the
same,
God call we Thee, or Good,—still
through the strife
Unchangeable alone, of all our change-
ful life,
With awe-struck souls we seek Thee, we
adore
Thy greatness ever more and more,
We turn to Thee with worship, till at
last,
Our journey well-nigh past,
When now our day of Life draws to its
end,
Looking, with less of awe and more of
love,
To Thy high throne above,
We see no dazzling brightness as of old,
No kingly splendours cold,
But the sweet Presence of a heavenly
Friend.

THE ODE OF EVIL.

OH, who shall sing of Life and not of
Ill?
The essence of our will
Is fullest liberty to stray,
From out the green and blessed way,

Amid the desert wastes of drought and death.
 This is the power that makes us free,
 This of our Being is the penalty ;
 And maybe the Eternal Will,
 Clothing itself with form to bid Creation
 be,
 Took to itself some boundary, and awhile,
 Self-limited, made vile
 And subjected to Law the Majesty
 Which all the Universe of Space did fill.

Evil is Life,
 The conflict of great laws pervading space ;
 Evil is strife,
 Which keeps the creature in its ordered place.
 If any hand divine should e'er withdraw
 The fixed coercive potency of Law,
 Surely the Universe of things would fade
 And cease and be unmade.
 Where Law is, there is Good,
 And freedom to obey or to transgress ;
 Else 'twere no Law, but, weaker far and less,
 If one created soul might not the thing it would.

Young lives spring up and fade,
 Wither and are oppress'd,
 Toil takes the world, and pain,
 And all the things that God has made
 Travail and groan and fain would be at rest,
 And Wrong prevails again.
 And we—we lift a hopeless eye
 Up to the infinite sky,
 Mourning the Ill that is, and shall be yet,
 Weak creatures who forgot

The very law and root of Life,
 That it is sown in pain and nursed in woe and strife.
 The evil blight of war
 Torments the race from age to age,
 And man slays man through all the years that are,
 And savage lust and brutal rage
 Deform this glorious heritage of earth.
 We shudder and grow faint,
 Knowing the dim fair dreams of seer and saint
 Show thin and little worth,
 The young life, rising, sinks in sloughs of sense,
 And wanders and is lost.
 Alas ! for days of young-eyed innocence.
 Alas ! for the calm hours ere, passion-crost,
 The young soul grew, a white flower sweet and pure.
 Yet not the less 'tis sure
 That not in tranquil zones of endless calm
 Grows best the victor's palm,
 But blown by circling storms which blot the sky,
 Nor fitting were it to the eye
 Always to look upon a cloudless sun,—
 Grown blind with too much light before the journey done.

The victories of Right
 Are born of strife.
 There were no Day were there no Night,
 Nor, without dying, Life.
 There only doth Right triumph, where the Wrong
 Is mightiest and most strong ;
 There were no Good, indeed, were there no Ill.

And when the final victory shall come,
Burst forth, oh Awful Sun, and draw
Creation home.

Not within Time or Space
Lines drawn in opposite ways grow
one,
But in some Infinite place
Before the Eternal throne ;
There, ways to-day divergent, Right
and Wrong,
Approach the nearer that they grow
more long.
There at the Eternal feast,
Fused, joined, and grown complete,
The circle rounds itself, the enclosing
wall
Of the Universe sinks down, and God
is all in all !

THE ODE OF AGE.

THERE is a sweetness in autumnal
days,
Which many a lip doth praise ;
When the earth, tired a little and grown
mute
Of song, and having borne its fruit,
Rests for a little space ere winter come.
It is not sad to turn the face towards
home,
Even though it shows the journey
nearly done ;
It is not sad to mark the westerling
sun,
Even though we know the imminent
night doth come.
Silence there is, indeed, for song,
Twilight for noon ;
But for the steadfast soul and strong
Life's autumn is as June.

As June itself, but clearer, calmer far ;
Here come no passion-gusts to mar,
No thunder-clouds or rains to beat
To earth the blossoms and the wheat,
No high tumultuous noise
(Of youth's self-seeking joys,
But a cold radiance white
As the moon shining on a frosty night.

To-morrow is as yesterday, scant
change,
Little of new or strange,
No glamour of false hope to daze,
Nor glory to amaze,
Even the old passionate love of love or
child

A temperate affection mild,
And ever the recurring thought
Returning, though unsought :
How strange the Scheme of Things !
how brief a span

The little life of man !
And ever as we mark them, fleeter and
more fleet,
The days and months and years, gliding
with winged feet.

And ever as the hair grows grey,
And the eyes dim,
And the lithe form which toiled the
live-long day,
The stalwart limb,

Begin to stiffen and grow slow,
A higher joy we know :
To spend the remnant of the wanng
year,

Ere comes the deadly chill,
In works of mercy, and to cheer
The feet which toil against life's rugged
hill ;
To have known the trouble and the fret,
To have known it, and to cease.

In a pervading peace,
Too calm to suffer pain, too living to
forget,
And reaching down a succouring hand
To where the sufferers are,
To lift them to the tranquil heights afar,
Whereon Time's conquerors stand.

And when the fruitful hours are done,
How sweet at set of sun
~~To gather up the fair laborious day !—~~
To have struck some blow for right
With tongue or pen ;
To have smoothed the path to light
For wandering men :
To have chased some fiend of Ill away ;
A little backward to have thrust
The instant powers of Drink and Lust,
To have borne down gaunt Despair,
To have dealt a blow at Care !
How sweet to light again the glow
Of hotter fires than youth's, tho' all the
blood runs slow !

Oh ! is there any joy,
Of all that come to girl or boy
Or manhood's calmer weal and ease,
To vie with these ?
Here is some sitting profit day by day,
Which nought can render less ;
Some glorious gain Fate cannot take
away,
Nor Time depress.
Oh, brother, fainting on your road !
Poor sister, whom the righteous shun !
There comes for you, ere life and
strength be done,
An arm to bear your load.
A feeble body, maybe bent, and old,
But bearing 'midst the chills of age
A deeper glow than youth's ; a nobler
rage ;
A calm heart yet not cold.

A man or woman, weak perhaps, and
spent,
To whom pursuit of gold or fame
Is as a fire grown cold, an empty name,
Whom thoughts of Love no more allure,
Who in a self-made nunnery dwell,
A cloistered calm and pure,
A beatific peace greater than tongue can
tell.

And sweet it is to take,
With something of the eager haste of
youth,
Some fainter glimpse of Truth
For its own sake ;
To observe the ways of bee, or plant,
or bird ;
To trace in Nature the ineffable Word,
Which by the gradual wear of secular
time,
Has worked its work sublime ;
To have touched, with strenuous grop-
ings dim,
Nature's extremest outward rim ;
To have found some weed or shell un-
known before ;
To advance Thought's infinite march a
footpace more ;
To make or to declare laws just and
sage ;
These are the joys of Age.

Or by the evening hearth, in the old
chair,
With children's children at our knees,
So like, yet so unlike the little ones of
old—
Some little lad with curls of gold,
Some little maid demurely fair,
To sit, girt round with ease,
And feel how sweet it is to live,
Careless what fate may give ;
To think, with gentle yearning mind,

Of dear souls who have crossed the Infinite Sea ; .
 To muse with cheerful hope of what shall be
 For those we leave behind
 When the night comes which knows no earthly morn ; .
 Yet mingled with the young in hopes and fears,
 And bringing from the treasure-house of years
 Some fair-set counsel long-time worn ;
 To let the riper days of life,
 The tumult and the strife,
 Go by, and in their stead
 Dwell with the living past, so living, yet so dead :
 The mother's kiss upon the sleeper's brow,
 The little fish caught from the brook,
 The dead child-sister's gentle voice and look,
 The school-days and the father's parting hand ;
 The days so far removed, yet oh ! so near,
 So full of precious memories dear ;
 The wonder of flying Time, so hard to understand !

Not in clear eye or ear
 Dwells our chief profit here.
 We are not as the brutes, who fade and make no sign ;
 We are sustained where'er we go,
 In happiness and woe,
 By some indwelling faculty divine,
 Which lifts us from the deep
 Of failing senses dim, and duller brain,
 And wafts us back to youth again ;
 And as a vision fair dividing sleep,
 Pierces the voids behind, the voids before,

And opens to us an invisible gate,
 And sets our winged footsteps, scorning Time and Fate,
 At the celestial door.

THE ODE OF DECLINE.

WITH forces well-nigh spent,
 Uneasy or in pain,
 Or brought to childish weakness once again,
 With bodies shrunk and bent,
 We come, if Fate so will, to cold decrepit age.
 The book of Life lies open at its latest page.

Only four score of summers, and four score
 Of winters, nothing more,
 And then 'tis done.
 We have spent our fruitful days beneath the sun ;
 We come to a cold season and a bare,
 Where little is sweet or fair.
 We, who a few brief years ago,
 Would passionately go
 Across the fields of life to meet the morn,
 We are content, content and not forlorn,
 To lie upon our beds, and watch the Day
 Which kissed the Eastern peaks, grow gradually grey.

Great Heaven, that Thou hast made our lives so brief
 And swiftly spent !
 We toil our little day and are content,
 Though Time, the thief,
 Stands at our side, and smiles his mystic smile.

We joy a little, we grieve a little while ;
 We gain some little glimpse of Thy
 great laws,
 Rolling in thunder through the voids
 of space ;
 We gain to look a moment on Thy
 face,
 Eternal Source and Cause !
 And then, the night descending as a
 cloud,
 We walk with aspect bowed,
 And turn to earth and see our Life
 grow dark.
 Was it for this the fiery spark
 Of Thy Eternal Self, sown on the vast
 And infinite abysses of the Past,
 Revealed itself and made Creation rise
 Before Thy Eternal Mind :
 This little span of life, with purblind
 eyes
 That grow completely blind ;
 This little force of brain,
 Holding dim thoughts sublime,
 Too weak to withstand the treacheries
 of Time ;
 This body bent and bowed in twain,
 Soon racked by growing pain,
 Which briefer far than is the life of the
 tree,
 Springs as a flower and fades, and then
 must rot
 And perish and be not,
 Passing from mystery to mystery ?

It is a pain
 To move through the old fields,—even
 though they lie
 Before our eyes, we know that never
 again,
 Where once our daily feet were used to
 pass
 Amid the crested grass,
 We any more shall wander till we die ;

Nor to the old grey church, with the
 tall spire,
 Whose vane the sunsets fire,
 Where once a little child, by kind hands
 led,
 Would spell the scant memorials of the
 dead,—
 Never again, or once alone,
 When pain and Time are done.

The soaring thoughts of youth
 Are dead and cold, the victories of
 Thought
 Are no more prized or sought
 By eyes which draw too near the face
 of Truth.
 Whatever fruit or gain
 Fate held in store,
 To tempt the growing soul or brain,
 Allures no more.
 It is as the late Autumn, when the
 fields
 Are bare of flower or fruit ;
 Nor charm nor profit the swept surface
 yields,
 Sullen and mute ;
 So that a doubting mind might come to
 hold
 The very soul and life were dead and
 cold.

But who can peer
 Into another soul, or tell at all
 What hidden energies beset
 The aged lingering here ?
 When all the weary brain
 Seems dull, the immeasurable fields of
 life
 Lie open to the memory, and again
 They know the youthful joys, the
 hurry and the strife,
 And feel, but gentler now, the ancient
 pain.

In the uneasy vigils of the night,
Before the tardy light ;
Or, lonely days, when no young lives
are by,
There come such long processions of
the dead,
The buried lives and hopes of far-off
years,
Spent joys and dried-up tears,
That round them stands a blessed
company !
Holding high converse, though no
word be said,
Till only what is past and gone doth
seem
To live, and all the Present is a dream.

So may the wintry earth,
Holding her precious seeds within the
ground,
Pause for the coming birth,
When like a trumpet-note the Spring
shall sound ;
So may the roots which, buried deep
And safe within her sleep,
Whisper as 'twere, within, tales of the
sun,—
Whisper of leaf and flower, of bee and
bird,—
Till by a sudden glory stirred,
A mystic influence bids them rise,
Bursting the narrow sheath
And cerement of death,
And bloom as lilies again beneath the
recovered skies.

THE ODE OF CHANGE.

I HAVE come to the time of the failing
of breath ;
I have reached the cold threshold of
Death !

Death ! there is not any Death ; only
infinite change,
Only a place of life which is novel and
strange.
Change ! there is naught but change
and renewal of strife,
Which make up the infinite changes
we sum up in life.
Life ! what is life, that it ceases with
ceasing of breath ?
Death ! what were Life without change,
but an infinite Death ?

As I lie on my bed, and the sun, like
a furnace of fire,
Burns amid the old pines in the west,
ere the last ray expire,
Can I dream he will rise no more, but
a fathomless night
Shall brood o'er Creation for ever, and
shut out the light ?
It is done, this Day of our Life ; but
another shall rise,
Day for ever following Day, in the
infinite skies,
Day following Day for ever !

Day following day, with the starlit
darkness between ;
Or, maybe in a world where Dawn
comes, ere our sunset has been ;
Day following Day for ever !

For ever ! though who shall tell in
what seeming or where ?
In what far-off secret space of God's
limitless air ?
It matters nothing at all what we are
or where set,
If a spark of the Infinite Light can
shine on us yet.
Life following Life for ever !

Life following Life for ever ! for what
if the Sun
Grew chilled, and the Universe cold,
and the orbits undone,
And all the great globes should fall
back into chaos once more ;
They would wake at a glance of the
Light, as they wakened before.
There is no Death for ever !

Cease ! but how should we cease while
God's light shall remain ?
He that has lighted Life's flame shall
light it again !
What if He take back for a while, as
the Sun from the Sea,
Some spark of the radiance divine that
hade all things to be ?
We rest in Him, we are sunk, we are
folded in Him, but we are :
As the star which draws near to the Sun
is obscured, but is still a star.
There is only Change for ever !

Shall I fear that I shall be changed and
no more shall be I ?—
I who know not what 'tis that I am, to
live or to die ?
Nay, while God is, I too must be, else
too weak were His hand ;
The created is part of His essence,—
how else could the Maker stand ?
There is no Death for ever !

Take me, oh infinite Cause, and cleanse
me of wrong !
Take me, raise me to higher Being
through centuries long !
Cleanse me, by pain, if need be,
through scions of days !
Take me and purge me, still I will
answer with praise—
There is no Death for ever !

Shall I mourn for those who are not
Nay, while love and regret
Still linger within our souls, they live
with us yet.
If we love, then the souls that we love,
they exist and they are,
As memory which makes us ourselves,
brings precious things from far.
Love lives and is for ever !

We are part of an Infinite Scheme,
All we that are ;
Man the high crest and crown of
things that be,
The fiery-hearted earth, the cold un-
fathomed sea,
The central sun, the intermittent star,
Things great and small,
We are but parts of the Eternal All ;
We live not in a barren, baseless
dream ;
No endless, ineffectual chain
Of chance successions launched in
vain ;
But every beat of Time,
Each sun that shines or fails to shine,
Each animate life that comes to throb
or cease, *.
Each life of herb or tree
Which blooms and fruits and then
forgets to be,
Each change of strife and peace,
Each soaring thought sublime,
Each deed of wrong and blood,
Each impulse towards an unattained
good,—
All with a sure, unsaltering working
tend
To one Ineffable, Beatific End.
Oh hidden Scheme, perfect Thyself,
and take
Our petty lives, and mould them as
Thou wilt !

All things that are, are only for Thy sake,
And not to obey Thee is our only guilt !
Perfect Thyself, and be fulfilled, oh great
Unfathomable Will, who art our Life and Fate !

There is hope, but nothing of fear,
Nought but a patient mind,
For him who waits with conscience clear
And soul resigned

Whate'er the mystic coming change
Shall bring of new and strange.
He looks back once upon the fields of life,
The good and evil locked in strife,
The happy and the unhappy days,
The Right we always love, the oft-triumphant Wrong ;
And all his Being to a secret song
Sings with a mighty and unsaltering voice—
“ I have been ; Thou hast done all things well ; I am glad : I give thanks ; I rejoice ! ”

SONGS UNSUNG.

PICTURES—I.

ABOVE the abysmal undivided deep
A train of glory streaming from afar ;
And in the van, to wake the worlds from sleep,
One on whose forehead shines the Morning-Star.

Long-rolling surges of a falling sea,
Smiting the sheer cliffs of an unknown shore ;
And by a fanged rock, swaying helplessly
A mast with broken cordage—nothing more.

Three peaks, one loftier, all in virgin white,
Poised high in cloudland when the day is done,
And on the mid-most, far above the night,
The rose-red of the long-departed sun.

A wild girl reeling, helpless, like to fall,
Down a hushed street at dawn in mid-summer ;
And one who had clean forgot their past and all,
From a lit palace casement pities her.

A young man, only clothed with youth's first bloom,
In mien and form an angel, not in eye ;

Hard by, a fell worm crawling from a tomb,
And one, wide-eyed, who cries, "The Enemy!"

A lake of molten fires which swell and surge
And fall in thunders on the burning verge ;
And one a queen rapt, with illumined face,
Who doth defy the Goddess of the place.

Eros beneath a red-cupped tree, asleep,
And 'mid the flowers, and thro' the air above,
Fair boys with silver wings who smiling peep
Upon the languid loosened limbs of love.

A darkling gateway, thronged with entering ghosts,
And a grave janitor, who seems to say :
"Woe, woe to youth, to life, which idly boasts ;
I am the End, and mine the appointed Way."

A young Faun making music on a reed,
Deep in a leafy dell in Arcady :
Three girl-nymphs fair, in musing thought take heed
Of the strange youth's mysterious melody.

A flare of lamplight in a shameful place
Full of wild revel and unchecked offence,
And in the midst, one fresh scarred-sullied face,
Within her eyes, a dreadful innocence.

A quire of seraphs, chanting row on row,
With lute and viol and high trumpet notes ;
And, above all, their soft young eyes aglow—
Child angels, making laud from full clear throats.

Some, on a cliff at dawn, in agony :
Below, a scaly horror on the sea,
Lashing the leaden surge. Fast-bound, a maid
Waits on the verge, alone, but unafraid.

A poisonous, dead, sad sea-marsh,
fringed with pine,
Scarce lit by mouldering churches, old as Time ;
Beyond, on high, just touched with wintry rime,
The long chain of the autumnal Apennine.

A god-like Presence, beautiful as Dawn,
Watching, upon an untrodden summit white,

The Earth's last day grow full, and
fade in night ;
Then, with a sigh, the Presence is
withdrawn.

A sheer rock-islet, frowning on the sea
Where no ship sails, nor ever life may
be :

Thousands of leagues around, from pole
to pole,
The unbounded lonely ocean-currents
roll.

Young maids who wander on a flower-
lit lawn,
In springtide of their lives as of the
year ;
Meanwhile, unnoticed, swift, a thing
of fear,
Across the sun, a deadly shadow drawn.

Slow, hopeless, overborne, without a
word,
Two issuing, as if from Paradise ;
Behind them, stern, and with unpitying
eyes,
Their former selves, wielding a two-
edged sword.

A weary woman tricked with gold and
glamour,
Wearing some strange barbaric diadem,
Scorn on her lips, and, like a hidden fire,
Within her eyes cruel unslaked desire.

Two aged figures, poor, and blurred
with tears ;
Their child, a bold proud woman,
sweeping by ;
A hard cold face, which pities not nor
fears,
And all contempt and evil in her eye.

Around a harpsichord, a blue-eyed
throng
Of long-dead children, rapt in sounds
devout,
In some old grange, while on that
silent song
The sabbath twilight fades, and stars
come out.

The end of things created ; Dreadful
night,
Advancing swift on sky, and earth, and
sea ;
But at the zenith a departing light,
A soaring countless blessed company !

THE LESSON OF TIME.

LEAD thou me, Spirit of the World,
and I
Will follow where thou leadest, will-
ingly ;
Not with the careless sceptic's idle
mood,
Nor blindly seeking some unreal good ;
For I have come, long since to that fall
day
Whose morning mists have fled and
cursed away—

That breathless afternoon-tide when
the Sun
Halts, as it were, before his journey
done,

Calm as a river broadening toward the
main,
Which never plunges down the rocks
again,
But, clearly mirrored in its tranquil
deep,
Holds tower and spire and forest as in
sleep.

How old and worn the metaphor ap-
pears,
Old as the tale of passing hopes and
fears !
New as the springtide air, which day
by day
Breathes on young lives, and speeds
them on their way.

The Roman knew it, and the Hellenes
too ;
Assyrian and Egyptian proved it true ;
Who found for youth's young glory and
its glow
Serenest life, and calmer tides run slow.

And them oblivion takes, and those
before,
Whose very name and race we know
no more,
To whom, oh Spirit of the World and
Man,
Thou didst reveal Thyself when Time
began, —

They felt, as I, what none may under-
stand ;
They touched through darkness on a
hidden hand ;

They marked their hopes, their faiths,
their longings fade,
And found a solitude themselves had
made ;

They came, as I, to hope which con-
quers doubt,
Though sun and moon and every star
go out ;
They ceased, while at their side a still
voice said,
“ Fear not, have courage : blessed are
the dead.”

They were my brothers—of one blood
with me,
As with the unborn myriads who shall
be :
I am content to rise and fall as they ;
I watch the dawning of the Perfect Day.

Lead thou me, Spirit, willing and
content
To be, if thou wouldst have me,
wholly spent.
I am thine own, I neither strive nor cry :
Stretch forth thy hand, I grasp it,
silently.

VENDREDI SAINT.

This is Paris, the beautiful city,
Heaven's gate to the rich, to the poor
without pity.
The clear sun shines on the fair town's
graces,
And on the cold green of the shrunken
river,
And the chill East blows, as 'twould
blow for ever,
On the holiday groups with their shin-
ing faces.

For this is the one solemn day of the season,
When all the swift march of her gay unreason
Pauses a while, and a thin veil of sadness
Half hides, from strange eyes, the old riot and madness,
And the churches are crowded with devotees holy,
Rich and poor, saint and sinner, the great and the lowly.
* * * *

Here is a roofless palace, where gape Black casements in rows without form or shape :

A sordid ruin, whose swift decay Speaks of that terrible morning in May When the whole fair city was blood and fire, And the black smoke of ruin rose higher and higher,

And through the still streets, 'neath the broad Spring sun, Everywhere murder and rapine were done ;

Women lurking, with torch in hand, Evil eyed, sullen, who soon should stand Before the sharp bayonets, dripping with blood, And be stabbed through and through, or shot dead where they stood.

* * * *
This is the brand-new Hôtel de Ville, Where six hundred wretches met death in the fire ; Ringed round with a pitiless hedge of steel, Not one might escape that swift vengeance. To-day

The ruin, the carnage, are clean swept away ; And the sumptuous façades, and the high roofs aspire,

And, upon the broad square, the white palace face Looks down with a placid and meaningless grace, Ignoring the bloodshed, the struggle, the sorrow, The doom that has been, and that may be to-morrow,

The hidden hatred, the mad endeavour, The strife that still is and shall be for ever.

* * * *
Here rise the twin-towers of Notre Dame, Through siege, and revolt, and ruin the same.

See the people in crowds pressing onward, slowly, Along the dark aisles to the altar holy— The altar, to-day, wrapt in mourning and gloom, Since He whom they worship lies dead in the tomb.

There, by a tiny acolyte tended, A round-cheeked child in his cassock white, Lies the tortured figure to which are bended The knees of the passers who gaze on the sight, And the people fall prostrate, and kiss and mourn The fair dead limbs which the nails have torn.

And the passionate music comes from the quire, Full of soft chords of a yearning pity

The mournful voices accordant aspire
To the far-off gates of the Heavenly
City ;
And the clear, keen alto, soaring high
and higher,
Mounts now a surging fountain, now a
heavenward fire.

Ay, eighteen centuries after the day,
A world-worn populace kneel and pray,
As they pass by and gaze on the limbs
unbroken.
What symbol is this? of what yearnings
the token?
What spell this that leads men a part
to be
Of this old Judean death-agony?

And I asked, Was it nought but a
Nature Divine,
That for lower natures consented to
die?
Could a greater than human sacrifice,
Still make the tears spring to the world-
worn eye?
One thought only it was that replied,
and no other :
This man was our brother.

* * *
As I pass from the church, in the cold
East wind,
Leaving its solemn teachings behind :
Once again, on the verge of the chill
blue river,
The blighted buds on the branches
shiver;
Here, again, stream the holiday groups,
with delight
Gaping in wonder at some new sight.
'Tis an open doorway, squalid and low,
And crowds which ceaselessly come and
go,

Careless enough ere they see the sight
Which leaves the gay faces pallid and
white :
Something is there which can change
their mood,
And check the holiday flow of the
blood.

For the face which they see is the face
of Death.
Strange, such a thing as the ceasing of
breath
Should work such miraculous change as
here :
Turn the thing that we love, to a thing
of fear ;
Transform the sordid, the low, the
mean,
To a phantasm, pointing to Depths
unseen.

There they lie, the dead, unclaimed
and unknown,
Each on his narrow and sloping stone.
The chill water drips from each to the
ground ;
No other movement is there, nor sound.
With the look which they wore when
they came to die,
They gaze from blind eyes on the piti-
less sky.

No woman to-day, thank Heaven, is
here ;
But men, old for the most part, and
broken quite,
Who, finding this sad world a place of
fear,
Have leapt forth hopelessly into the
night,
Bankrupt of faith, without love, un-
friendly,
Dead-tired of life's comedy ere 'twas
ended.

But here is one younger, whose ashy face To the fair dead Christ by his altar place,
 Bears some faint shadow of former grace. And the same thought replies to my soul, and no other—
 What brought him here? was it love's sharp fever? This, too, was our brother.
 Was she worse than dead that he bore to leave her?
 Or was his young life, ere its summer came, Burnt by Passion's whirlwinds as by a flame.
 Was it Drink or Desire, or the die's sure shame, Which led this poor wanderer to deep disgrace?
 Was it hopeless misfortune, unmixed with blame, That laid him here dead, in this dreadful place?
 Ah Heaven, of these nineteen long centuries, Is the sole fruit this thing with the sightless eyes!
 Yesterday, passion and struggle and strife, Hatred, it may be, and anger-choked breath;
 Yesterday, fear and the burden of life; To-day, the cold ease and the calmness of death:
 And that which strove and sinned and yielded there, To-day in what hidden place of God's mysterious air?
 Whatever he has been, here now he lies, Facing the stare of un pitying eyes. I turn from the dank and dishonoured face,

"NO MORE, NO MORE."
 "No more, no more," the autumnal shadows cry;
 "No more, no more," our failing hearts reply:
 Oh! that our lives were come to that calm shore
 Where change is done, and fading is no more.
 But should some mightier hand completion send,
 And smooth life's stream unripped to its end,
 Our sated souls, filled with an aching pain,
 Would yearn for fleeting days and years again.
 Thrice blessed be the salutary change
 Which day by day brings thoughts and feelings strange!
 Our gain is loss, we keep but what we give,
 And only daily dying may we live.

THE NEW CREED.

YESTERDAY, to a girl I said—
 "I take no pity on the unworthy dead,
 The wicked, the unjust, the vile who die;
 'Twere better thus that they should rot and lie.

The sweet, the lovable, the just

Make holy dust ;

Elsewhere than on the earth

Shall come their second birth.

Until they go each to his destined
place,

Whether it be to bliss or to disgrace,

'Tis well that both shall rest, and for a
while be dead."

"There is nowhere else," she said.

"There is nowhere else." And this
was a girl's voice

Who, some short tale of summers gone
to-day,

Would carelessly rejoice,
As life's blithe springtide passed upon
its way

And all youth's infinite hope and bloom
Shone round her; nor might any
shadow of gloom

Fall on her as she passed from flower
to flower;

Love sought her, with full dower

Of happy wedlock and young lives to
rear;

Nor shed her eyes a tear,
Save for some passing pity, fancy-bred.

All good things were around her—
riches, love,

All that the heart and mind can move,
The precious things of art, the un-
defiled

And innocent affection of a child.

Oh girl, who always sunny ways dost
tread,

What curse is this that blights that
comely head?

For right or wrong there is no further
place than here,

No sanctities of hope, no chastening
fear?

"There is nowhere else," she said.

"There is nowhere else," and in the
wintry ground

When we have laid the darlings of our
love—

The little lad with eyes of blue,
The little maid with curls of gold,

Or the beloved aged face
On which each passing year stamps a
diviner grace—

That is the end of all, the narrow
bound.

Why look our eyes above
To an unreal home which mortal never
knew—

Fold the hands on the breast, the clay-
cold fingers fold?

No waking comes there to the uncaring
dead!

"There is nowhere else," she said.

Strange; is it old or new, this deep
distress?

Or do the generations, as they press
Onward for ever, onward still,
Finding no truth to fill

Their starving yearning souls, from year
to year?

Feign some new form of fear
To fright them, some new terror
Couched on the path of error,
Some cold and desolate word which,
like a blow,

Forbids the current of their faith to flow,
Makes slow their pulse's eager beat,
And, chilling all their wonted heat,
Leaves them to darkling thoughts and
dreads a prey,

Uncheered by dawning shaft or setting
ray?

Ah, old it is, indeed, and nowise new.
This is the poison-growth that grew

In the old thinkers' fancy-haunted ground.
 They, blinded by some keen too-vivid gleam
 Of the Unseen, to which all things did seem
 To shape themselves and tend,
 Solved, by some Giant Force, the Mystery of Things,
 And, soaring all too high on Fancy's wings,
 Saw in dead matter both their Source and End.
 They felt the self-same shock and pain
 As I who hear these prattlings cold to-day.
 Not otherwise of old the fool to his heart did say.
 "There is no other place of joy or grief,
 Nor wrong in doubt, nor merit in belief :
 There is no God, nor Lord of quick and dead ;
 There is nowhere else," they said.
 And, indeed, if any to whom life's path were rough
 Should say as you, he had cause maybe at sight,
 Truly, the way is steep and hard enough,
 And wrong is tangled and confused with right ;
 And from all the world there goes a solemn sound
 Of lamentations, rising from the ground,
 Confused as that which shocks the wondering ear
 Of one who, gliding on the still lagune,
 Finds the oar's liquidplash and tune
 Lost in wild cries of frenzy and of fear,
 And knows the Isle of Madness drawing near ;

And the great scheme, if scheme there be indeed,
 Is a book deeper than our eyes may read,
 Full of wild paradox, and vain endeavour,
 And hopes and faiths which find completion never.
 For such a one, in seasons of dismay
 And dark depression deepening to despair,
 Clouds come oftentimes to veil the face of day,
 And there is no ray left of all the beams of gold,
 The glow, the radiance bright, the unclouded faith of old.
 But you, poor child forlorn,
 Ah ! better were it you were never born ;
 Better that you had flung your heart away
 On some coarse lump of clay ;
 Better defeat, disgrace, childlessness, all
 That can a solitary life befall,
 Than to have all things and yet be Self-bound to dark despondency,
 And self-tormented, beyond reach of doubt,
 By some cold wold that puts all yearnings out.
 "There is nowhere else," she said :
 This is the outcome of their crude Belief
 Who are, beyond all rescue and relief,
 Being self-slain and numbered with the dead.
 "There is no God but Force,
 Which, working always on its destined course,
 Speeds on its way and knows no thought of change.

Within the germ the molecule fares free,
Holding the potency of what shall be ;
Within the little germ lurks the heaven-
reaching tree :
No break is there in all the cosmic
show.
What place is there, in all the Scheme
Immense,
For a remote unworking Excellence
Which may not be perceived by any
sense,
Which makes no humble blade of grass
to grow,
Which adds no single link to things and
thoughts we know ?"

" For everything that is, indeed,
Bears with it its own seed ;
It cannot change or cease and be no
more :
All things for ever are even as they
were before,
Or if, by long degrees and slow,
More complex doth the organism grow,
It makes no break in the eternal plan ;
There is no gulf that yawns between
the herb and man."

Poor child, what is it they have taught,
Who through deep glooms and desert
wastes of thought
Have brought to such as you their dreary
creed ?
Have they no care, indeed,
For all the glorious gains of man's long
past,
For all our higher hope of what shall
be at last ?
" All things are moulded in one mould ;
They spring, they are, they fade by one
compulsion cold—
Some dark necessity we cannot know,
Which bids them wax and grow,—

That is sufficient cause for all things,
quick and dead !"
" There is no Cause else," she said.

Oh, poor indeed, and in evil case,
Who shouldst be far from sound of doubt
As a maiden in some restful place
Whose tranquil life, year in year out,
Is built on gentle worship, homely days
Lit each by its own light of prayer and
praise,
For whom the spire points always to
the sky,
And heaven lies open to the cloistered
eye.
For us, for us, who uid the weary strife
And jangling discords of our life
Are day by day oppress,
'Twere little wonder were our souls
distrest,
God, and the life to be, and all our
early trust
Being far from us expelled and thrust ;
But for you, child, who cannot know
at all
To what mysterious laws we stand or
fall,
To what bad heights the wrong within
may grow,
To what dark deeps the stream of hope-
less lives may flow !

For let the doubter cavil as he can,
There is no wit in man
Which can make Force rise higher
still
Up to the heights of Will.—
No phase of Force which finite minds
can know
Can self-determined grow,
And of itself elect what shall its essence
be :
The same to all eternity,

Unchanged, unshaped, it goes upon its
blinded way ;
Nor can all forces nor all laws
Bring ceasing to the scheme, nor any
pause,
Nor shape it to the mould in which to be—
Form from the winged seed the myriad-
branching tree,—
Nor guide the force once sped, so that
it turn
To Water-floods that quench or Fires
that burn,
Or now to the electric current change,
Or draw all things by some attraction
strange,
Or in the brain of man, working unseen,
sublime,
Transcend the narrow bounds of Space
and Time.

Whence comes the innate Power which
knows to guide
The force deflected so from side to side,
That not a barren line from whence to
where
It goes upon its way through the un-
settled air ?
What launched the prisoned atom on
its fruitful course ?
Ah, it was more than Force
Which gave the Universe of things its
form and face !
Force moving on its path through Time
and Space
Would round no orb, but leave all
barren still.
A higher Power, it was, the worlds
could form and fill ;
And by some pre-existent harmony
Were all things made as Fate would
have them be—
Fate, the ineffable Word of an Eternal
Will.

All things that are or seem,
Whether we wake who see or do but
dream,
Are of that Primal Will phantasms, if
no more ;
Who sees these right sees God, and
seeing doth adore.
Joy, suffering, evil, good,
Whate'er our daily food,
Whate'er the mystery and paradox of
things,
Low creeping thoughts and high ima-
ginings.
The laughter of the world, the age-
long groan,
Bring to his mind one name, one thought
alone ;
All beauty, right, deformity, or wrong,
Sing to his ear one high unchanging song ;
And everything that is, to his rapt
fancy brings
The hidden beat through space of the
Eternal Wings.
Where did the Idea dwell,
At first, which was of all the germ and
seed ?
Which worked from Discord order,
from blind Force
Spel all the Cosmos on its upward
course ?
Which held within the atom and the cell
The whole vast hidden Universe, shel-
tered well,
Till the hour came to unfold it, and the
need ?
What did the ever-upward growth con-
ceive,
Which from the obedient monad formed
the herb, the tree,
The animal, the man, the high growths
that shall be ?

Ever from simpler to more complex grown,
The long processions from a source unknown
Unfold themselves across the scene of life.
Oh blessed struggle and strife,
Fare onward to the end, since from a Source
Thou art, which doth transcend and doth determine Force !
Fare onward to the end ; not from Force, dead and blind
Thou comest, but from the depths of the Creative Mind.
Fare on to the end, but how should ending be,
If Will be in the Universe, and plan ? Some higher thing shall be, that which to-day is Man.
Undying is each cosmic force : Undying, but transformed, it runs its endless course.
It cannot wane, or sink, or be no more.
Not even the dust and lime which clothe us round
Lose their own substance in the charnel-ground,
Or carried far upon the weltering wind ; Only with other growths combined,
In some new whole they are for ever— They are, and perish never.
The great suns shed themselves in heat and light
On the vast vacant interstellar air,
Till when their scattered elements unite They are replenished as before they were.
Nothing is lost, nor can be : change alone,
Unceasing, never done,

Shapes all the forms of things, and keeps them still
Obedient to the Unknown Perfect Will.
And shall the life that is the highest that we know,
Shall this, alone, no more increase, expand and grow ?
Nay, somewhere else there is, although we know not where,
Nor what new shape God gives our lives to wear.
We are content, whatever it shall be ; Content, through all eternity,
To be whatever the Spirit of the World deem best ;—
Content to be at rest ;
Content to work and fare through endless days ;
Content to spend ourselves in endless praise :
Nay, if it be the Will Divine,
Content to be, and through long lives to pine,
Far from the light which vivifies, the fire
Which breathes upon our being and doth inspire
All soaring thoughts and hopes which light our pathway here ;
Content, though with some natural thrill of fear,
To be purged through by age-long pain,
Till we resume our upward march again ;
Content, at need, to take some lower form,
Some humbler herb or worm
To be awhile, if e'er the eternal plan Go back from higher to lower, from man to less than man.

A GREAT GULF.

Not so, indeed, we hold, but rather
this—
That all Time gone, that all that was
or is,
The scarped cliff, the illimitable Past,
This truth alone of all truths else hold
fast :—
From lower to higher, from simple to
complete,
This is the pathway of the Eternal Feet ;
From earth to lichen, herb to flowering
tree,
From cell to creeping worm, from man
to what shall be.
This is the solemn lesson of all time,
This is the teaching of the voice
sublime :
Eternal are the worlds, and all that
them do fill ;
Eternal is the march of the Creative
Will ;
Eternal is the life of man, and sun, and
star ;
Ay, even though they fade a while,
they are ;
And though they pause from shining,
speed for ever still.

A GREAT GULF.

If any tender sire
Who sits girt round by loving faces
And happy childhood's thousand
graces,
Through sudden crash or fire
Should 'scape from this poor life to
some mysterious air,
And, dwelling solitary there,
Feel his unfilled and yearning father's
heart
Pierced through by some intolerable
smart ;

And, sickening for the dear lost lives
again,
Through his o'ermastering pain
Should break the awful bounds the
Eternal sets between
That which lives Here, and There, the
Seen and the Unseen ;

And having gained once more
This little Earth, should reach the
scarce-left place
Which greets him with unchanged
familiar face—
The well-remembered door,
The rose he watered blooming yet,
Nought to remember or forget,
No change in all the world except in
him,
Nor there save in some sense already dim
Before the unaltered past, so that he
seem
A mortal spirit still, and what was
since, a dream ;

And in the well-known room
Finds all the blithe remembered faces
Grown sad and blurred by recent traces
Of a new sorrow and gloom,
And when his soul to comfort them is
fain
Mourns his voice mute, his form
unknown, unseen,
And thinks with irrepressible pain
Of all the happy days which late have
been,
And feels his new life's inmost chambers
stirred
If only of his own, he might be seen or
heard ;

Then if, at length,
The father's yearning and o'erburdened
soul

Burst into shape and voice which scorn control
 Of its despairing strength,—
 Ah Heaven ! ah pity for the present dread
 Which rising, strikes the old affection dead !
 Ah, better were it far than this thing to remain,
 Voiceless, unseen, unloved, for ever and in pain !

So when a finer mind,
 Knowing its old self swept by some weird change
 And the old thought deceased, or else grown strange,
 Turns to those left behind,
 With passionate stress and mighty yearning stirred,—
 It strives to stand revealed in shape and word
 In vain; or by strong travail visible grown,
 Finds but a world estranged, and lives and dies alone !

ONE DAY.

ONE day, one day, our lives shall seem Thin as a brief forgotten dream :
 One day, our souls by life oppress, Shall ask no other boon than rest.

And shall no hope nor longing come, No memory of our former home, No yearning for the loved, the dear Dead lives that are no longer here ?

If this be age, and age no more Recall the hopes, the fears of yore, The dear dead mother's accents mild, The lisping of the little child,

Come, Death, and slay us ere the blood Run slow, and turn our lives from good ; For only in such memories we Consent to linger and to be.

SEASONS.

The colds winds rave on the icy river,
 The leafless branches complain and shiver,
 The snow clouds sweep on, to a dreary tune,—
 Can these be the earth and the heavens of June ?—

When the blossoming trees gleam in virginal white,
 And heaven's gate opens wide in the lucid night,
 And there comes no sound on the perfumed air
 But the passionate brown bird, carolling fair,

And the lush grass in upland and low- land stands deep,
 And the loud landrail lulls the children to sleep,
 And the white still road and the thick leaved wood
 Are haunted by fanciful solitude ;

And by garden and lane men and maidens walk,
 Busied with trivial, loverlike talk ;
 And the white and the red rose, newly blown,
 Open, each with a perfume and grace of its own.

The cold wind sweeps o'er the desolate hill,
The stream is bound fast and the wolds are chill ;
And by the dead flats, where the cold blasts moan,
A bent body wearily plods alone.

THE PATHOS OF ART.

Often, seeing the old painters' art,
We find the tear unbidden start,
And feel our full hearts closer grow
To the far days of long ago.

Not burning faith, or godlike pain,
Can thus our careless thought enchain :
The heavenward gaze of souls sublime,
At once transcends, and conquers time.

Nor pictured form of seer or saint,
Which hands inspired delight to paint ;
Art's highest aims of hand or tongue,
Age not, but are for ever young.

But some imperfect trivial scene,
Of homely life which once has been,
Of youth, so soon to pass away,
Of happy childhood's briefer day :

Or humble daily tasks portrayed—
The thrifty mistress with her maid ;
The flowers, upon the casement set,
Which in our Aprils blossom yet ;

The long processions, never done ;
The time-worn palace, scarce begun ;
The gondolier, who plies his oar
For stately sirs or dames of yore ;

The girl with fair hair morning-stirred,
Who swings the casement for her bird ;

The hunt ; the feast ; the simple mirth
Which marks the marriage or the birth ;

The burly forms, from side to side
Swift rolling on the frozen tide ;
The long-haired knights ; the ladies prim ;
The chanted madrigal or hymn ;

The opera, with its stately throng ;
The twilight church aisles stretching long :
The spires upon the wooded wold ;
The dead pathetic life of old ;—

These all the musing mind can fill—
So dead, so past, yet living still :
Oh dear dead lives, oh hands long gone,
Whose life, whose Art still lingers on !

IV. THE STRAND.

In the midst of the busy and roaring Strand,
Dividing life's current on either hand,
A time-worn city church, sombre and grey,
Waits, while the multitude passes away.

Beside it, a strait plot of churchyard ground
Is fenced by a time-worn railing around ;
And within, like a pavement, the ground is spread
With the smooth worn stones of the nameless dead.

But here and there, in the spaces between,
When the slow Spring bursts, and the fields grow green,

Every year that comes, 'mid the graves
of the dead

Some large-leaved flower-stem lifts up
its head.

In the Spring, though as yet the sharp
East be here,

This green stem burgeons forth year by
year :

Through twenty swift summers and
more, have I seen

This tender shoot rise from its sheath
of green.

New busy crowds pass on with hurry-
ing feet,

The young lives grow old and the old
pass away ;

But unchanged, 'mid the graves, at the
fated day,

The green sheath bursts upwards and
grows complete.

From the grave it bursts forth, 'mid the
graves it shall die,

It shall die as we die, as it lives we
shall live ;

And this poor flower has stronger
assurance to give,

Than volumes of learning, which
blunder or lie.

For out of the dust and decay of the
tomb,

It springs, the sun calling, to beauty
and bloom ;

And amid the sad city, 'mid death and
'mid strife,

It preaches its mystical promise of life.

CÆLUM NON ANIMUM.

Off fair to be, oh sweet to be
In fancy's shalllop faring free,
With silken sail and fairy mast
To float till all the world be past !

Oh happy fortune, on and on
To wander far till care be gone,
Round beetling capes, to unknown
seas,
Seeking the fair Hesperides !

But is there any land or sea
Where toil and trouble cease to be--
Some dim, unfound, diviner shore,
Where men may sin and mourn no
more ?

Ah, not the feeling, but the sky
We change, however far we fly ;
How swift soe'er our bark may speed,
Faster the blessed isles recede.

Nay, best it is at home to find
Food for the labouring heart and mind,
And take, since thus the world grows
fair,
Duty and pleasure everywhere.

Oh well-worn road, oh homely way,
Where pace our footsteps, day by day,
The homestead and the church which
bound
The tranquil seasons' circling round !

Ye hold experiences which reach
Depths which no change of skies can
teach,
The saintly thought, the secret strife
Which guide, which do perturb our
life.

NIOBE.

ON SYPYLUS.

All me, ah me ! on this high mountain peak,
 Which far above the seething Lydian plains
 Takes the first dawn-shaft, and the sunset keeps
 When all the fields grow dark—I, Niobe,
 A mother's heart, pent in a prison of stone,
 Stand all day in the vengeful sun-god's eye,
 Stand all night in the cold gaze of the moon,
 Who both long ages since conspiring, slew
 My children,—I a childless mother now
 Who was most blest, a grieving woman still,
 Who am bereft of all, yet cannot die.
 Ah day, ill-fated day, which wrecked my life !
 I was the happy mother of strong sons, Brave, beautiful, all in their bloom of age :
 From him my first-born, now a bearded man,
 Through the fair promise of imperfect youth,
 To the slim stripling who had scarcely left
 The women's chambers, on whose lip scant shade
 Of budding manhood showed, I loved them all ;
 All with their father's eyes, and that strange charm

Of rhythmic grace, and musical utterance
 As when, in far-off Thebes, the enchanted wall
 Rose perfect, to the music of his lyre.
 Ah me, the fatal day ! For at high noon I sate within my Theban palace fair— Deep summer-time it was—and marked the crowd
 From the thronged city street, to the smooth plain,
 Stream joyously : the brave youths, full of life,
 Stripped for the mimic fray, the leap, the race,
 The wrestling; and the princes, my strong sons,
 The fair limbs I had borne beneath my zone
 Grown to full stature, such as maidens love,—
 The sinewy arms, the broad chests, and strong loins
 Of manhood ; the imperfect flower-like forms,
 Eager with youth's first fires ; my youngest born,
 My darling, doffing his ephебic robe
 Which late he donned with pride, a child in heart,
 In budding limbs a youth ;—I see them go,
 Their fair young bodies glistening in the sun,
 Which kissed the shining olive. As they went,
 The joyous concourse winding towards the plain,
 My happy eyes o'erflowed, and as I turned
 And saw my daughters round me, fair grown lives

And virgin, sitting spinning the white flax,
Each with her distaff, beautiful and fit
To wed with any stately king of men
And reign a queen in Hellas, my glad heart
Broke forth in pride, and as I looked I thought,
“ Oh happy, happy mother of such sons !
Oh happy, happy mother of such girls !
For whom full soon the joyous nuptial rites
Shall bring the expectant bridegroom and the bride,
And soon once more the little childish hands
Which shall renew my early wedded years,
When the king loved me first. Thrice blest indeed.
There is no queen in Hellas such as I,
Powered with such fair-grown offspring ; not a queen
Nor mother o'er all earth's plain, around which flows
The wide salt stream of the encircling sea,
As blest as I. Nay, in Olympus' self
To all-compelling Zeus, what offspring bare
Leto of yore ? Phœbus and Artemis,
A goodly pair indeed, but two alone.
Poor mother, that to such a lord as Zeus
Bare only those, no fairer than my own.
Nay, I am happier than a goddess' self ;
I would not give this goodly train of mine
For that scant birth. I ask no boon of Zeus,

Nor of the Olympian Gods ; for I am glad.
No fruitful mother in a peasant's hut, Scorning the childless great, thinks scorn of me,
Being such as I. Nay, let Queen Leto's self
Know, that a mortal queen has chanced to bear
As fair as she, and more.”
Even as I spoke,
While these unhallowed boastings flushed my pride,
Through the closed lattice pierced one angry shaft
Of blinding sun, which on the opposite wall
Traced some mysterious sign, and on my mind
Such vague remorse and consciousness of ill,
That straight, that arrogant boldness sank and died
In a great dread, nor hardly could I bear To look upon the fairness of my girls,
Who, seeing the vague trouble in my eyes,
Grew pale, and shuddered for no cause, and gazed
Chilled 'midst the blaze of sunlight.
Then I strove To laugh my fears away, as one who knows
Some great transgression weigh on him, some load
Which will not be removed, but bears him down,
Though none else knows it, pressing on his heart.
But when the half unuttered thought grew dim
And my fear with it, suddenly a cry

Rose from the city street, and then the sound
 Of measured hurrying feet, and looking forth
 To where the youth had passed so late, in joy,
 Came two who carried tenderly, with tears,
 A boy's slight form. I had no need to look,
 For all the mother rising in me knew
 That 'twas my youngest born they bore : I knew
 What fate befell him—'twas the vengeful sun,
 And I alone was guilty, I, his mother,
 Who being filled with impious pride,
 had brought
 Death to my innocent child. I hurried down
 The marble stair and met them as they came,
 Bearing his corpse, and kissed his lips and called
 His name, yet knew that he was dead ; and all
 His brothers stood regarding us with tears,
 And would have soothed me with their loving words,
 Me guilty, who were guiltless, oh, my sons !
 Till as I looked up from the dead,—a cry
 Of agony,—and then another fell
 Struggling for life upon the earth, and then
 Another, and another, till the last
 Of all my stalwart boys, my life, my pride,
 Lay dead upon the ground, and the fierce sun
 Frenzied my brain, and all distraught with woe
 I to the palace tottered, while they bore
 Slowly the comely corpses of my sons.
 That day I dare not think of when they lay,
 White shrouded, in the darkened palace rooms,
 Like sculptured statues on a marble hearse,
 How calm they looked and happy, my dear sons !
 There was no look of pain within their eyes,
 The dear dead eyes which I their mother closed ;
 Me miserable ! I saw the priests approach,
 And ministers of death ; I saw my girls flung weeping on the brothers whom they loved.
 I saw it all as in a dream. I know not how often the dead night woke into day,
 How often the hot day-time turned to night.
 I did not shudder even to see the Sun which slew my sons ; but in the still, dead night,
 When in that chill and lifeless place of death,
 The cold, clear, cruel moonlight seemed to play
 Upon the ranged corpses, and to mock My mother's heart, and throw on each a hue
 Of swift corruption ere its time, I knew Some secret terror lest the jealous gods Might find some further dreadful vengeance still,
 Taking what yet was left.

At set of sun
The sad procession to the place of
 graves
Went with the rites of royal sepulture,
The high priest at its head, the nobles
 round
The dear white shrouded corpses: Last
 of all
I went, the guilty one, my fair sweet
 girls
Clinging to me in tears; but I, I shed
 not
A single tear—grief dried the fount of
 tears,
I had shed all mine.

Only o'ermastering dread
Held me of what might come.

When they were laid,
Oh, wretched me, my dear, my well-
 loved sons!
Within the kingly tomb, the dying sun
Mad set, and in his stead the rising
 moon,
Behind some lofty mountain-peak con-
 cealed,
Relit some ghostly twilight. As we
 knelt,
The people all withdrawn a little space,
I and my daughters in that place of
 death,
I lifted up my suppliant voice, and they
With sweet girl voices pure, and soaring
 hymn,
To the great Powers above.

But when at last
I heard my hollow voice pleading alone
And all the others silent, then I looked,
And on the tomb the cold malignant
 moon,
Bursting with pale chill beams of light,
 revealed
My fair girls kneeling mute and motion-
 less,

Their dead eyes turned to the unpitying
 orb,
Their white lips which should offer
 prayer no more.

Such vengeance wreaked Phœbus and
 Artemis

Upon a too proud mother. But on me
Who only sinned no other punishment
They took, only the innocent lives I
 loved--

If any punishment, indeed, were more
Than this to one who had welcomed
 death. I think

My children happier far in death than I
Who live to muse on these things.
 When my girls

Were laid in earth, I, my lone palace
 gate

Leaving without a tear, sped hither in
 haste

To this high rock of Sipylus where erst
My father held his court; and here,
 long years,

Summer and winter, stay I, day and
 night

Gazing towards the far-off plain of
 Thebes, .

Wherein I was so happy of old time,
Wherein I erred and suffered. Turned-
 to stone

They thought me, and 'tis true the
 mother's heart

Which knows such grief as I knew,
 turns to stone,

And all her life; and pitying Zeus, in-
 deed,

Seeing my suffering, listened to my
 prayer

And left me seeming stone, but still the
 heart

Of the mother grows not hard, and year
 by year

When comes the summer with its cloudless skies,
And the high sun lights hill and plain by day,
And the moon, shining, silvers them by night,
My old grief, rising dew-like to my eyes,
Quicken my life with not unhappy tears,
And through my penitent and yearning heart
There throbs again a pulse of love and grief :
Love triumphing at last o'er Fate and Death,
Grief all divine and vindicating Love.

PICTURES—II.

A LURID sunset, red as blood,
Firing a sombre, haunted wood ;
From whose recesses, dark and fell,
One hurries with a face of Hell.

Two at a banquet board alone,
In dalliance, the feast being done.
And one behind the arras stands,
Grasping an axe with quivering hands.

A high cliff-meadow lush with Spring ;
Gay butterflies upon the wing ;
Beneath, beyond, unbounded, free,
The foam-flecked, blue, pervading sea.

A clustering hill-town, climbing white
From the grey olives up the height,

And higher on the glaring sky
A huge sierra, dead and dry.
—
A rain-swept moor at shut of day,
And by the dead unhappy way
A lonely child unattended lies :
Against the West a wretch who flies.

Cold dawn, which flouts the abandoned hall,
And one worn face, which loathes it all ;
In his ringed hand a vial, while
The grey lips wear a ghastly smile.

Corinthian pillars fine, which stand
In moonlight on a desert sand ;
Others o'erthrown, in whose dark shade
Some fire-eyed brute its lair has made.

Mountainous clouds embattled high
Around a dark blue lake of sky ;
And from its clear depths, shining far,
The calm eye of the evening star.

A moonlight chequered avenue ;
Above, a starlit glimpse of blue :
And from the thick-laced shade between
The grey ghost of a woman seen.

A NIGHT IN NAPLES.

THIS is the one night in all the year
When the faithful of Naples who love
their priest

May find their faith and their wealth increased ;
For just as the stroke of midnight is here,

Those who with faithful undoubting mind
Their "Aves" mutter, their rosaries tell,
They without doubt shall a recompence find ;
Yea, their faith indeed shall profit them well.

Therefore, to-night, in the hot thronged street

By San Gennaro's, the people devout, With banner, and relic, and thurible meet,

With some sacred image to marshal them out.

For a few days hence, the great lottery Of the sinful city declared will be, And it may be that Aves and Paters said

Will bring some aid from the realms of the dead.

And so to the terrible place of the tomb They issue, a pitiful crowd, through the gloom,

To where all the dead of the city decay, Waiting the trump of the judgment day.

For every day of the circling year Brings its own sum of corruption here ; Every day has its great pit, fed With its dreadful heap of the shroudless dead.

And behind a grated rust-eaten door, Marked each with their fated month and day,

The young and the old, who in life were poor, Fester together and rot away.

Silence is there, the silence of death, And in silence those poor pilgrims wearily pace, And the wretched throng, pitiful, holding its breath, Comes with shambling steps to the dreadful place.

Till before these dark portals, the muttering crowd

Breaks at length into passionate suffrages loud,

Waiting the flickering vapour thin, Bred of the dreadful corruption within.

And here is a mother who kneels, not in woe,

By the vault where her child was flung months ago ;

And there is a strong man who peers with dry eyes

At the mouth of the gulph where his dead wife lies.

Till at last, to reward them, a faint blue fire,

Like the ghost of a soul, flickers here or there

At the gate of a vault, on the noisome air,

And the wretched throng has its low desire ;

And with many a praise of favouring saint,

And curses if any refuses to heed, Full of low hopes and of sordid greed, To the town they file backward, weary and faint.

And a few days hence, the great lottery
Of the sinful city declared will be,
And a number thus shewn to those
sordid eyes,
May, the saints being willing, attain
the prize.

Wherefore to Saint and Madonna be
said,
All praise and laud, and the faithful
dead !

* * * *

It was long, long ago, in far-off Judea,
That they slew Him of old, whom
these slay to-day :
They slew Him of old, in far-off
Judea,—
It is long, long ago; it was far, far away !

LIFE.

LIKE to a star, or to a fire,
Which ever brighter grown, or higher,
Doth shine forth fixed, or doth aspire ;

Or to a glance, or to a sigh ;
Or to a low wind whispering by,
Which scarce has risen ere it die ;

Or to a bird, whose rapid flight
Eludes the dazed observer's sight,
Or a stray shaft of glancing light,

That for an instant breaks the gloom
Which wraps some dark, forgotten
tomb,
Or some sweet Spring-flower's fleeting
bloom ;—

Mixed part of reason, part belief,
Of pain and pleasure, joy and grief,
As changeful as the Spring, and
brief ;—

A wave, a shadow, a breath, a strife,
With change on change for ever rise !—
This is the thing we know as life.

CRADLED IN MUSIC.

A BRIGHT young mother, day by day,
I meet upon the crowded way,
Who turns her dark eyes, deep and
mild,
Upon her little sleeping child.

For on the organ laid asleep,
In childish slumbers light, yet deep,
Calmly the rosy infant lies ;
The long fair lashes veil its eyes.

There, o'er its childish slumbers sweet,
The winged hours steal with noiseless
feet ;
Far off the music seems to cheer
The child's accustomed drowsy ear.

Hymn tune and song tune, grave and
gay,
Comfort him all the joyous day ;
And, half remembered, faintly seem
To mingle with his happy dream.

Poor child, for whom the summer long
Our dull days slip by, winged with
song ;

Sleeping for half the tuneful day,
Waking 'neath loving looks to play :

Whose innocent eyes unconscious see
Nothing but mirth in misery.
Thy mother smiles, thy sister stands
Smiling, the tambour in her hands.

And with the time of hard-earned rest,
'Tis thine to press that kindly breast ;

Nor dream of all the toil, the pain,
The weary round begun again,—

The fruitless work, the blow, the curse,
The hunger, the contempt, or worse ;
The laws despite, the vague alarms,
Which pass not those protecting arms.

Only, as yet, 'tis thine to know
The bright young faces all aglow,
As down the child-encumbered street
The music stirs the lightsome feet,

Only to crow and smile, as yet.
Soon shall come clouds, and cold, and
wet ;
And where the green leaves whisper
now,
The mad East flinging sleet and snow.

And if to childhood thou shalt come—
Childhood that knows not hearth or
home,—
Coarse words maybe, and looks of
guile,
Shall chase away that constant smile.

Were it not better, child, than this,
The burden of full life to miss ;
And now, while yet the time is May,
Amid the music pass away.

And leave the dissonant cries of wrong
For the immortal, perfect song ;
And take the changeless heavenly life
For earth's poor vagrant toil and strife ;

And keep, within those opened skies,
A vision of thy mother's eyes ;
And hear those old strains, faint and
dim,
Grown fine, within the eternal hymn ?

Nay, whatsoe'er our thought may deem,
Not that is better which may seem ;
'Twere better that thou camest to be,
If Fate so willed, in misery.

What shall be, shall be—that is all ;
To one great Will we stand and fall.
“ The Scheme hath need ”—we ask not
why,
And in this faith we live and die.

ODATIS.

AN OLD LOVE-TALE.

CHARLES of Mytilene, ages gone,
When the young Alexander's conquer-
ing star
Flamed on the wondering world, being
indeed
The comrade of his arms, from the far
East
Brought back this story of requited
love.

A Prince there was of Media, next of
blood
To the great King Hystaspes, fair of
form
As brave of soul, who to his flower
of age
Was come, but never yet had known
the dart
Of Cypris, being but a soldier bold,
Too much by trench'd camps and wars'
alarms
Engrossed, to leave a thought for things
of love.

Now, at this selfsame time, by Tanais
Omarthes ruled, a just and puissant
king.

No son was his, only one daughter fair,
Odatis, of whose beauty and whose
worth
Fame filled the furthest East. Only as
yet,
Of all the suitors for her hand, came
none
Who touched her maiden heart ; but,
fancy free,
She dwelt unwedded, lonely as a star.

Till one fair night in springtide, when
the heart
Blossoms as does the earth, Cypris, the
Queen,
Seeing that love is sweet for all to taste,
And pitying these loveless parted lives,
Deep in the sacred silence of the night,
From out the ivory gate sent down on
them
A happy dream, so that the Prince had
sight
Of fair Odatis in her diadem
And habit as she lived, and saw the
charm
And treasure of her eyes, and knew
her name
And country as it was ; while to the
maid
There came a like fair vision of the
Prince
Leading to fight the embattled Median
hosts,
Young, comely, brave, clad in his
panoply
And pride of war, so strong, so fair, so
true,
That straight, the virgin coldness of
her soul
Melted beneath the vision, as the snow
In springtime at the kisses of the

And when they twain awoke to com-
mon day
From that blest dream, still on their
trancèd eyes
The selfsame vision lingered. He a form
Lovelier than all his life had known,
more pure
And precious than all words : she a
strong soul
Yet tender, comely with the fire, the
force
Of youthful manhood ; saw both night
and day.

Nor ever from their mutual hearts the
form
Of that celestial vision waned nor grew
Faint with the daily stress of common
life,
As do our mortal phantasies, but still
He, while the fiery legions clashed and
broke,
Saw one sweet face above the flash of
spears ;
She in high palace pomps, or house-
hold tasks,
Or 'mid the glittering courtier-crowded
halls
Saw one brave ard'nt gaze, one manly
form.

Now while in dreams of love these
lovers lived
Who never met in waking hours, who
knew not
Whether with unrequited love they
burned, or whether
In mutual yearnings blest : the King
Omartes,
Grown anxious for his only girl, and
knowing
How blest it is to love, would bid her
choose

Whom she would wed, and summoning
the maid,

With fatherly counsels pressed on her :
but she :

" Father, I am but young ; I prithee,
ask not

That I should wed ; nay, rather let me
live

My life within thy house. I cannot
wed.

I can love only one, who is the Prince
Of Media, but I know not if indeed
His love is his to give, or if he know
My love for him ; only a heavenly
vision,

Sent in the sacred silence of the night,
Revealed him to me as I know he is.

*Wherefore, my father, though thy will
be law,

Have pity on me ; let me love my love,
If not with recompence of love, alone ;
For I can love none else."

Then the King said :

" Daughter, to me thy happiness is
life,

And more ; but now, I pray thee, let
my words

Sink deep within thy mind. Thou
canst not know

If this strange vision through the gate
of truth

Came or the gate of error. Oftentimes
The gods send strong delusions to
ensnare

Too credulous hearts. Thou canst not
know, in sooth,

If 'twas the Prince thou saw'st, or,
were it he,

If love be his to give ; and if it were,
I could not bear to lose thee, for indeed
I have no son to take my place, or pour
Libations on my tomb, and shouldst
thou wed

A stranger, and be exiled from thy
home, .

What were my life to me ? Nay,
daughter, dream

No more, but with some chieftain of
my realm

Prepare thyself to wed. With the new
moon

A solemn banquet will I make, and bid
Whate'er of high descent and generous
youth

Our country holds. There shalt thou
make thy choice

Of whom thou wilt, nor will I seek to
bind

Thy unfettered will ; only I fain would
see thee

In happy wedlock bound, and feel the
touch

Of childish hands again, and soothe my
age

With sight of thy fair offspring round
my knees."

Then she, because she loved her sire
and fain

Would do his will, left him without a
word,

Obedient to his best ; but day and
night

The one unsading image of her dream
Filled all her longing sight, and day
and night

The semblance of her Prince in all the
pride

And bravery of battle shone on her.
Nor was there any strength in her to
heal

The wound which love had made, by
reasonings cold,

Or musing on the phantasies of sleep ;
But still the fierce dart of the goddess
burned

Within her soul, as when a stricken deer
O'er hill and dale escaping bears with her
The barb within her side ; and oft alone
Within her secret chamber she would name
The name of him she loved, and oft by night,
When sleep had bound her fast, her pale lips formed
The syllables of his name. Through the long hours,
Waking or sleeping, were her thoughts on him :
So that the quenchless yearning long deferred
Made her heart sick, and like her heart, her form
Wasted, her fair cheek paled, and from her eyes
Looked out the silent suffering of her soul.

Now, when the day drew near which brought the feast,
One of her slaves, who loved her, chanced to hear
Her sweet voice wandering in dreams, and caught
The Prince's name ; and, being full of grief
And pity for her pain, and fain to aid
The gentle girl she loved, made haste to send
A messenger to seek the Prince and tell him
How he was loved, and when the feast should be,
And how the King would have his daughter wed.
But to the Princess would she breathe no word

Of what was done, till, almost on the eve
Of the great feast, seeing her wan and pale
And all unhappy, falling at her knees, She, with a prayer for pardon, told her all.

But when the Princess heard her, virgin shame—
Love drawing her and Pride of Maidenhood
In opposite ways till all distraught was she—
Flushed her pale cheek, and lit her languid gaze.
Yet since she knew that loving thought alone
Prompted the deed, being soft and pitiful,
She bade her have no fear, and though at first
Unwilling, by degrees a newborn hope Chased all her shame away, and once again
A long unwonted rose upon her cheek Bloomed, and a light long vanished fired her eyes.

Meanwhile upon the plains in glorious war
The brave Prince led his conquering hosts ; but still, Amid the shock of battle and the crash Of hostile spears, one vision filled his soul.
Amid the changes of the hard-fought day,
Throughout the weary watches of the night,
The dream, the happy dream, returned again ; Always the selfsame vision of a maid

Fairer than earthly, filled his eyes and took
 The savour from the triumph, ay, and touched
 The wartor's heart with an unwonted ruth,
 So that he shrank as never yet before
 From every day's monotony of blood,
 And saw with unaccustomed pain the sum
 Of death and woe, and hopeless, shattered lives,
 Because a softer influence touched his soul.

Till one night, on the day before the feast
 Which King Omartes destined for his peers,
 While now his legions swept their conquering way
 A hundred leagues or more from Tanais,
 There came the message from the slave,
 and he
 Within his tent, after the well-fought day,
 Resting with that fair image in his eyes,
 Woke suddenly to know that he was loved.

Then, in a moment, putting from him sleep
 And well-earned rest, he bade his charioteer
 Yoke to his chariot three unbroken colts
 Which lately o'er the endless Scythian plain
 Careered, untamed ; and, through the sleeping camp,
 Beneath the lucid aspect of the night,
 He sped as speeds the wind. The great
 stars hung like lamps above the plain ; the great stars sank

And faded in the dawn ; the hot red sun
 Leapt from the plain ; noon faded into eve ;
 Again the same stars lit the lucid night ;
 And still, with scarce a pause, those fierce hoofs dashed
 Across the curved plain onward, till he saw
 Far off the well-lit palace casements gleam
 Wherin his love was set.

Then suddenly
 He checked his panting team, the rapid wheels
 Ceased, and his mail and royal garb he hid
 Beneath a rich robe such as nobles use
 By Tanais ; and to the lighted hall
 He passed alone, bidding his charioteer
 Await him in the darkness by the gate.

Now, when the Prince drew near the vestibule,
 The feast long time had sped, and all the guests
 Had eaten and drunk their fill ; and he unseen,
 Through the close throng of serving men and maids
 Around the door, like some belated guest
 To some obscurer station slipped, and took
 The wine-cup with the rest, who marvelling not
 To see him come, nor knew him ; only she
 Who sent the message whispered him a word :
 "Have courage ; she is there, and cometh soon.
 Be brave ; she loves thee only ; watch and wait."

Even then the King Omartes, where he
sate
On high among his nobles, gave com-
mand
To summon from her maiden chamber
forth
The Princess. And obedient to the call,
Robed in pure white, clothed round
with maiden shame,
Full of vague hope and tender yearning
love,
To the high royal throne Odatis came.

And when the Prince beheld the maid,
and saw
The wonder which so long had filled
his soul—
His vision of the still night clothed with
life
And breathing earthly air – and marked
the heave
Of her white breast, and saw the tell-
tale flush
Crimson her cheek with maiden
modesty,
Scarce could his longing eager arms
forbear
To clasp the virgin round, so fair she
seemed.
But, being set far down from where the
King
Sat high upon the dais 'midst the crowd
Of eager emulous faces looking love,
None marked his passionate gaze, or
stretched-forth hands ;
Till came a pause, which hushed the
deep-drawn sigh
Of admiration, as the jovial King,
Full tender of his girl, but flushed with
wine,
Spake thus to her :
“ Daughter, to this high feast
Are bidden all the nobles of our land.

Now, therefore, since to wed is good
and life
To the unwedded woman seems a load
Which few may bear, and none desire
I prithee,
This jewelled chalice taking, mingling
wine
As well thou knowest, and the honeyed
draught
Give to some noble youth of those thou
seest
Along the well-ranged tables, known
well
That him to whom thou givest, thou
shalt wed.
I fitter not thy choice, girl. I grow old,
I have no son to share the weight of rule,
And fain would see thy children great
die.”

Then, with a kiss upon her blushing
cheek,
He gave the maid the cup. The cressets
light
Fell on the jewelled chalice, which
gave back
A thousand answering rays. Silent she
stood
A moment, half in doubt, then down
the tile
Of close-ranked eager faces flushed with
hope,
And eyes her beauty kindled more than
wine,
Passed slow, a breathing statue. Her
white robe
Among the purple and barbaric gold
Showed like the snowy plumage of a
dove,
As down the hall, the cup within her
hands,
She, now this way regarding and now
that,

Passed, with a burning blush upon her cheek ;
 And on each youthful noble her large eyes
 Rested a moment only, icy cold ; though many indeed were there, brave, fair to see,
 't for a maiden's love ; but never at all
 The one o'ermastering vision of her dream
 Rose on her longing eyes, till hope itself
 Grew faint, and, ere she gained the end, she turned,
 Fekening to where, along the opposite wall,
 Yet other nobles young and brave as those,
 But not the fated vision of her dream.
 Meanwhile the Prince, who 'mid the close-set throng
 Of humbler guests was hidden, saw her come
 And turn ere she had marked him, and again
 Down the long line of princely revellers
 Pass slow as in a dream ; and all his soul
 Grew sick with dread lest haply, seeing
 The one expected face, and being meek
 And dutiful, and reverent to her sire,
 She in despair might make some sudden choice
 And leave him lovelorn. And where'er she went
 He could not choose but gaze, as oft in sleep
 Some dreadful vision chains us that we fail

To speak or move, though to be still is death.
 And once he feared that she had looked on him
 And passed, and once he thought he saw her pause
 By some tall comely youth ; and then she reached
 The furthest wall, and as she turned her face
 And came toward him again to where the jars
 Of sweet wine stood for mingling, with a bound
 His heart went out to her ; for now her cheek
 As pale and lifeless as the icy moon,
 And the dead hope within her eyes, and pain
 Of hardly conquered tears, made 'ure his soul,
 Knowing that she was his.
 But she, dear heart, Being sick indeed with love, and in despair,
 Yet reverencing her duty to her sire, Turned half-distraught to fill the fatal cup
 And with it mar her life.
 But as she stood
 Alone within the vestibule and poured
 The sweet wine forth, slow, trembling, blind with tears,
 A voice beside her whispered, " Love, I am here ! "
 And looking round her, at her side she saw,
 A youthful mailed form—the festal robe Flung backward, and the face, the mouth, the eyes
 Whereof the vision filled her night and day.

Then straight, without a word, with
one deep sigh,
She held the wine-cup forth. He
poured out first
Libation to the goddess, and the rest
Drained at a draught, and cast his
arms round her,
And down the long-drawn sounding
colonnade
Snatched her to where without, beneath
the dawn,
The brave steeds waited and the
charioteer.
His robe he round her threw; they saw
the flare
Of torches at the gate; they heard the
shouts
Of hot pursuit grow fainter; till at
last,
In solitude, across the rounding plain
They flew through waking day, until
they came
To Media, and were wed. And soon
her sire,
Knowing their love, consented, and
they lived
Long happy lives: such is the might of
Love.

That is the tale the soldier from the
East,
Chares of Mytilene, ages gone,
Told oftentimes at many a joyous feast
In Hellas; and he said that all the
folk
In Media loved it, and their painters
limned
The story in the temples of their gods,
And in the stately palaces of kings,
Because they revered the might of
Love.

IN WILD WALES.

I.—AT THE EISTEDDFOD.

The close-ranked faces rise,
With their watching, eager eyes,
And the banners and the mottoes blaze
above;
And without, on either hand,
The eternal mountains stand,
And the salt sea river ebbs and flows
again,
And through the thin-drawn bridge the
wandering winds complain.

Here is the Congress met,
The bardic senate set,
And young hearts flutter at the voice of
fate;
All the fair August day
Song echoes, harpers play,
And on the unaccustomed ear the
strange
Penillion rise and fall through change
and counter-change.

Oh Mona, land of song!
Oh mother of Wales! how long
From thy dear shores an exile have I
been!
Still from thy lonely plains,
Ascend the old sweet strains,
And at the mine, or plough, or humble
home,
The dreaming peasant hears diviner
music come.

This innocent, peaceful strife,
This struggle to fuller life,
Is still the one delight of Cymric souls—
Swell, blended rhythms! still
The gay pavilions fill.

Soar, oh young voices, resonant and fair;

Still let the sheathed sword gleam above the bardic chair.

* * * * *

The Menai ebbs and flows,
And the song-tide wanes and goes,
And the singers and the harp-players
are dumb;

The eternal mountains rise
Like a cloud upon the skies,
And my heart is full of joy for the
songs that are still,
The deep sea and the soaring hills, and
the steadfast Omnipotent Will.

II.—AT THE MEETING FIELD.

HERE is the complement of what I saw
When late I sojourned in the halls of
song,
The greater stronger Force, the higher
Law,
Of those which carry Cymric souls
along.

No dim Cathedral's fretted aisles were
there,
No gay pavilion fair, with banners
hung;
The eloquent pleading voice, the
deep hymns sung,
The bright sun, and the clear un-
fettered air.

These were the only ritual, this the
fane,
A poor fane doubtless and a feeble
rite
For those who find religion in dim
light,
Strange vestments, incensed air, and
blazoned pane.

But the rapt crowd, the reverent mute
throng,

When the vast listening semi-circle
round,
Rang to the old man's voice serenely
strong,
Or swept along in stormy bursts of
sound.

Where found we these in temples made
with hands?

Where, the low moan which marks
the awakened soul?

Where, this rude eloquence whose
strong waves roll
Deep waters, swift to bear their Lord's
commands?

Where found we these? 'neath what
high fretted dome?

I know not. I have knelt 'neath
many, yet
Have heard few words so rapt and
burning come,
Nor marked so many eyes divinely
wet,

As here I knew—“What will you do,
oh friends,
When life ebbs fast and the dim light
is low,
When sunk in gloom the day of plea-
sure ends,
And the night cometh, and your
being runs slow,

And nought is left you of your revel-
ries,
Your drunken nights, your wanton-
ness, your ill—
And lo! the last dawn rises cold and
chill,
And lo! the lightning of All-seeing eyes,

What will you do?" And when the low voice ceased,
And from the gathered thousands surged the hymn,
Some strong power choked my voice,
my eyes grew dim.
I knew that old man eloquent, a priest.

There is a consecration not of man,
Nor given by laid-on hands nor acted rite,
A priesthood fixed since the firm earth began,
A dedication to the eye of Light,
And this is of them. What the form of creed
I care not, hardly the fair tongue I know,
But this I know, that when the concourse freed
From that strong influence, went sedate and slow,

I thought when on the Galilean shore
By the Great Priest the multitudes were led,
The bread of life, miraculously more,
Sufficed for all who came, and they were fed.

SUFFRAGES.

"SURELY," said a voice, "O Lord, Thy judgments are dreadful and hard to understand. Thy laws which Thou madest, they withstand Thee, They stand against Thee and Thy command : Thy poor, they are with us evermore ; They suffer terrible things and sore ;

They are starved, they are sick, they die,
And there is none to help or heed ;
They come with a great and bitter cry,
They hardly dare to whisper, as they plead ;
And there is none to hear them, God or man ;
And it is little indeed that all our pity can.

What, and shall I be moved to tears, As I sit in this still chamber here alone, By the pity of it,—the childish lives that groan, The miseries and the sorrows, the hopes and the fears Of this wonderful legend of life, that is one and the same Though it differ in weal and in happiness, honour and fame,— Shall I turn, who am no more than a worm, to Thee, From the pity of it—the want, the misery, And with strong yearnings beat, and rebellions wild, Seeing death written, and pain, in the face of a child ;— And yet art Thou unmoved ! Ah, Lord, if Thou sawest surely !—and yet Thou dost see ; And if Thou knewest indeed !—and yet all things are clear to Thee.

For, Lord, of a truth Thy great ones, Who have not their wealth of their own desert, Live ever equal lives and sure, And are never vexed nor suffer hurt, But through long untroubled years endure

Until they join Thee, and are in bliss ;
 Or, maybe, are carried away from
 Thee, and miss
 Thy Face, which is too pure for them
 to see,
 And are thenceforth in misery :
 But, nevertheless, upon the earth
 They come to neither sorrow nor
 dearth.
 They are great, and they live out their
 lives, and Thou leittest them be ;
 Thou dost not punish them here, if
 they despise
 Thy poor and pass them by with averted
 eyes.
 They are strong and mighty, and never
 in danger to fall ;
 But Thou, Lord, art mighty and canst,
 and yet carest not at all.
 But wherefore is it that such things
 are ;—
 That want and famine, and blood and
 war
 Are everywhere, and do prevail ?
 And wherefore is it the same monotonous tale
 Is ever told by the lips of men ?
 For there is hardly so hard a heart
 In the breast of a man who has taken
 his part
 In the world, and has little children
 around his knees,
 But is filled with great love for them as
 Thou art for these,
 And would give up all for their good,
 and is vexed day and night
 With fatherly doubts and fears and
 yearnings for right,
 And grows sick, if evil come nigh them
 body or soul,
 And yet is but a feeble thing, without
 strength or control.

But Thou art almighty for good ; yet
 Thy plagues, they come,
 Hunger and want and disease, in a
 terrible sum ;
 And the poor fathers waste, and are
 stricken with slow decay ;
 And the children fall sick, and are
 starving, day after day ;
 And the hospital wards are choked ;
 and the fire and the flood
 Vex men still, and the leaguered cities
 are red with blood.
 Ay, yet not the less, O Lord,
 I know Thou art just and art good indeed.
 This is it that doth perplex my thought,
 So that I rest not content in any creed.
 If I knew that Thou wert the Lord of
 Ill,
 Then were I untouched still,
 And, if I would, might worship at Thy
 shrine ;
 Or if my mind might prove no Will
 Divine
 Inspired the dull mechanical reign of
 Law.
 But now, while Thou art surely, and
 art good,
 And wouldest Thy creatures have in
 happiness,
 Alway the sword, the plague prevail
 no less,
 Not less, not less Thy laws are based
 in blood.
 And such deep inequalities of lot
 Confuse our thought, as if Thy hand
 were not.
 All blessings, health and wealth and
 honours spent
 On some unworthy sordid instrument ;
 Thy highest gift of genius flung away
 On some vile thing of meanest clay,

Who foul the ingrate lips, touched
with Thy fire,
With worse than common mire :
How should I fail alone, when all things
groan,
To let my weak voice take a pleading
tone !
How should I speak a comfortable
word
When such things are, O Lord ! ”

This is the cry that goes up for ever
To Heaven from weak and striving
souls : .
But the calm Voice makes answer to
them never ;
The undelaying chariot onward rolls.

But another voice : “ O Lord of all, I
bless Thee,
I bless Thee and give thanks for all.
Thou hast kept me from my childhood
up,
Thou hast not let me fall.
All the fair days of my youth
Thou wast beside, me and Thy truth.
I bless Thee that Thou didst withhold
The blight of fame, the curse of gold ;
Because Thou hast spared my soul as
yet,
Amid the wholesome toil of each swift
day,
The tumult and the fret
Which carry worldly lives from Thee
away.

I thank Thee for the sorrows Thou hast
sent,
Being in all things content
To see in every loss a greater gain,
A joy in every pain ;
The losses I have known, since still I
know
Lives, hidden with Thee, are and grow.

I do not know, I cannot tell,
How it may be, yet death and pain are
well :
I know that Thou art good and mild,
Though sickness take and break the
helpless child ;
'Twas Thou, none else, that gav'st the
mother's love,
And even her anguish came from Thee
above.
I am content to be that which Thou
wilt :
Tho' humble be my pathway and ob-
scure,
Yet from all stain of guilt
Keep Thou me pure.
Or if Thy evil still awhile must find
Its seat within my mind,
Be it as Thou wilt, I am not afraid.

And for the world Thy hand has made,
Thy beautiful work, so wondrous fair :
Thy mysteries of dawn, Thy cloudless
days ;
Thy mountains, soaring high through
Thy pure air ;
Thy glittering sea, sounding perpetual
praise ;
Thy starlit skies, whence worlds un-
numbered gaze ;
Thy earth, which in Thy bounteous
summer-tide
Is clad in flowery robes and glorified ;
Thy still primeval forests, deeply stirred
By Thy great winds as by an unknown
word ;
Thy fair, light-wingèd creatures, blithe
and free ;
Thy dear brutes living, dying, silently :
Shall I from them no voice to praise
Thee find ?
Thy praise is hymned by every balmy
wind

That wanders o'er a wilderness of flowers ;
By every happy brute which asks not why,
But rears its brood and is content to die.
From Thee has come whatever good is ours ;—
The gift of love that doth exalt the race ;
The gift of childhood with its nameless grace ;
The gift of age which slow through ripe decay,
Like some fair fading sunset dies away ;
The gift of homes happy with honest wealth,
And fair lives flowering in unbroken health,—
All these are Thine, and the good gifts of brain,
Which to heights greater than the earth can gain,
And can our little minds project to Thee,
Through Infinite Space—across Eternity.
For these I praise Thy name ; but above all
The precious gifts Thy bounteous hand lets fall,
I praise Thee for the power to love the Right,
Though Wrong awhile show fairer to the sight ;
The power to sin, the dreadful power to choose
The evil portion and the good refuse ;
And last, when all the power of ill is spent,
The power to seek Thy face and to repent."

This is the answering cry that goes for ever
To Heaven from blest untroubled souls :
But the calm Voice makes answer to them never ;
The undelaying chariot onward rolls.

LOOK OUT, O LOVE.

LOOK out, O Love, across the sea :
A soft breeze fans the summer night,
The low waves murmur lovingly,
And lo ! the beacon's fitful light.

Some day perchance, when I am gone,
And muse by far-off tropic seas,
You may be gazing here alone,
On starlit waves and skies like these.

Or perhaps together, you and I,
Rapt each in each, no other by,
Shall watch again that fitful flame,
And know that we are not the same.

Or maybe we shall come no more,
But prisoned on some unknown shore,
In dreams shall see that light again,
And hear that starlit sea complain.

CLYTÆMNESTRA IN PARIS.

I SEEMED to pace the dreadful corridors
Of a still foreign prison, blank and white,
And in a bare and solitary cell
To find a lonely woman, soft of voice
And mild of eye, who never till life's end
Should pass those frowning gates. Me thought I asked her

The story of her crime, and what hard fate
Left her, so gentle seeming, fettered there,
Hopeless, a murderer at whose very name
Men shuddered still. And to my questioning
Methought that dreadful soul made answer thus :

'Yes, I suppose I liked him, though I know not ;
I hardly know what love may be ; how should I ?—
I a young girl wedded without my will, As is our custom here, to a man old, Not perhaps in years, but dark experiences.
What had we two in common, that worn man, And I, an untrained girl ? It was not strange
If when that shallow boy, with his bold tongue, And his gay eyes, and curls, and budding beard, Flattered me, I was weak. I think all women Are weak sometimes, and overprone to love
When the man is young, and straight, and 'twas a triumph To see the disappointed envious jades Wince as he passed them carelessly, nor heeded Their shallow wiles to trap him,—ay, a triumph ! And that was all ; I hardly know, indeed, If it was love that drove, or only pride To hold what others grudged me. Vain he was,

And selfish, and a coward, as you shall hear.
Handsome enough, I grant you, to betray A stronger soul than mine. Indeed, I think, He never cared for me nor I for him (For there were others after him) : I knew it, Then chieftest, when our comedy of life Was turning at the last to tragedy.
"Now that I was unfaithful, a false wife, I value not men's sneers at a pin's point, We have a right to love and to be loved ; Not the mere careless tolerance of the spouse Who has none to give. True, if I were a nun, Vowed to a white and cloistered life, no doubt 'Twere otherwise. They tell me there are women Who are so rapt by thoughts of the poor, of churches, Of public ends, of charity, of schools, Of Heaven knows what, they live their lives untouched By passion ; but for us, who are but women, Not bred on moonlight, made of common clay, Untrained for aught but common bouri- geois life, Life is no mystical pale procession winding Its way from the cradle to the grave, but rather A thing of hot swift flushes, fierce delight,

Good eating, dances, wines, and all the rest,
When the occasion comes. I never loved him,
I tell you ; therefore, maybe, did no sin.

" But when this fellow must presume to boast,
Grow cold, have scruples for his soul and mine,
And turn to other younger lives, and pass
My door to-day with this one, then with that,
And 'all the gossips of the quarter sneered,
And knew I was deserted, do you think it
A wonder that my eyes, opened at last,
Saw all the folly and the wickedness
(If sweet it were, where were the wickedness ?)
Which bore such bitter fruit? Think you it strange
That I should turn for aid, ay, and revenge,
To my wronged spouse—if wronged he be, indeed,
Who doth consent as he did? When I told him,
Amid my tears, he made but small pretence
Of jealousy at all; only his pride
Was perhaps a little wounded. And indeed
It took such long confessions, such grave pain
Of soul, such agony of remorse of mine
To move him but a little, that I grew so weary of it all, it almost checked
My penitence, and left me free to choose

Another for my love ; but at the last,
Long labour, feigned reports, the neighbours' sneers,
These drove him at the last, good easy man,
To such a depth of hatred, that my task
Crew lighter, and my heart.

He bade me write
Loving appeals, recalling our past days
Together ; and I wrote them, using all
The armoury of loving cozening words
With which craft arms us women : but in vain,
For whether some new love engrossed,
or whether
He wearied of me and my love, I know not,
Only, in spite of all, no answer came.

" At length, since I could get no word from him,
My husband bade me write—or was it I
Who thought of the device? Pray you believe me,
I would speak nothing else than the whole truth,
But these sad dreadful deeds confuse the brain.
Well, perhaps 'twas I, who knew his weakness well;
I do not know, but somehow it came to pass
I wrote a crafty letter, begging of him,
By all our former kindness, former wrong,
If for the last time, recognizing well
That all was done between us evermore,
We might, for one last evening, meet and part.

And, knowing he was needy, and his
greed,—

'If only he would come,' I wrote to
him,

'I had some secret savings, and
desired—

For what need comes there closer than
a friend's?—

To help him in his trouble.'

Swift there came—
The viper!—hypocritical words of love:
Yes, he would come, for the old love
still lived,
He knew it, ah, too well; not all the
glamour
Of other eyes and lips could ever quench
The fire of that mad passion. He
would come,
Loving as ever, longing for the day.

"Now when we had the answer,
straight we three—
My husband and myself, and his weak
brother,
Whose daughter to her first communion
went
That very day,—and I, too, took the
Host
As earnest of changed life,—we three,
I say,
At a little feast we made to celebrate
The brothers reconciled (in families
There come dissensions, as you know),
devised
His punishment. We hired, in a still
suburb,
A cottage standing backward from the
street,
Beyond an avenue of sycamores;
A lonely place, unnoticed. Day by
day
We went, we three together—for I
feared

Lest, if there were no third, the strength
of youth

Might bear my husband down—we
went to make

All needful preparations. First we
spread

Over all the floor a colour like to blood,
For deep's the stain of blood, and what
shall cleanse it?

Also, my husband, from a neighbour-
ing wood,

Had brought a boar-trap, sharp with
cruel knives

And jagged teeth, to close with a snap
and tear

The wild beast caught within it. But
I deemed

The risk too great, the prey might slip
away;

Therefore, that he might meet his
punishment,

And to prevent the sound of cries and
groans,

My husband fashioned for his lips a
gag,

And on the mantel left it, and the
means

To strike a light. And being thus
prepared,

We three returned to Paris; there long
time

We sate eating and drinking of the
best,

As those do who have taken a resolve
Whence no escape is, save to do and
die.

"Then the two men went back and
left me there,

With all my part to do. It was an
hour

Or more before the time when my poor
dupe

Had fixed to meet me. Wandering thus alone
Through the old streets, seeing the common sights
Of every day, the innocent child-faces Homing from school, so like my little ones,
I seemed to lose all count of time. At length,
Because it was the Ascension Feast, there came
A waft of music from the open doors Of a near church, and, entering in, I found
The incensed air, all I remembered well—
The lights, the soaring chants, the kneeling crowds,
When I believed and knelt. They seemed to soothe
My half bewildered fancy, and I thought—
What if a woman, who mayhap had sinned
But lightly, wishing to repair her wrong,
And bound thereby to some dark daring deed
Of peril, should come here, and kneel awhile,
And ask a blessing for the deed, of her
Who is Heaven's Queen and knows our weaknesses,
Being herself a woman ! So I knelt In worship, and the soaring voices clear
And the dim heights and suffrage-laden air.
Filled me with comfort for my soul, and nerved
My failing heart, and winged time's lagging flight,

Till lo the hour was come when I should go
To meet him for the last time.

" When we left
The city far behind, the sweet May night
Was falling on the quiet village street ; There was a scent of hawthorn on the air
As we passed on with feint of loving words,—
Passed slow like lovers to the appointed place,
Passed to the place of punishment and doom.

" But when we reached the darkling avenue
Of sycamores, which to the silent house
Led through a palpable gloom, I felt him shudder
With some blind vague presentiment of ill,
And he would go no further; but I clung
Around him close, laughed all his fear to scorn,
Whispered words in his ear, and step by step,
My soul on reparation being bent,
Drew him reluctant to the fated door
Where lay my spouse in ambush, and swift death.

" I think I hear the dreadful noise of the key,
Turning within the disused lock, the hall
Breathing a false desertion, the loid sound

Of both our footsteps echoing through
the house.
I could not choose but tremble. Yet
I knew
'Twas but a foolish weakness. Then
I struck
A match, and in the burst of sudden
light
I saw the ruddy cheek grown ashy
pale,
And as he doffed his hat, I marked the
curls
On his white forehead, and the boyish
grace
Which hung around him still, and al-
most felt
Compassion. Then the darkness came
again,
And hid him, and I groped to find his
hand,
Clutched it with mine, and led him to
the door.

"But when within the darkling room
we were
Where swift death waited him, not
dalliance,
Three times my trembling fingers failed
to wake
The twinkling light which scarce could
pierce the gloom
Which hid my husband. Oh, to see
his face
When the dark aspect and the furious
eyes
Glared out on him ! 'I am lost ! ' he
cried, 'I am lost ! '
And then the sound of swift and
desperate fight
And a death struggle. Listening, as I
stood
Without, with that mean craven hound,
our brother,

I heard low cries of rage, and knew
despair
And youth had nerved the unarmed in
such sort
As made the conflict doubtful. Then
I rushed
Between them, threw my arms around
him, clogged
His force and held him fast, crying the
while,
'Wretch, would you kill my husband ?'
—held him fast,
As coils a serpent round the escaping
deer,
Until my husband, hissing forth his
hate,
'Villain, I pierce thy heart as thou
hast mine,'
Stabbed through and through his heart.

" But oh, but oh
The lonely road, beneath the dreadful
stars !
To the swift stream, we three—nay,
nay, we four—
One on the child's poor carriage
covered o'er,
And three who drew him onward, on
the road,
That dead thing, having neither eye
nor ear,
Which late was full of life, and strife,
and hate.
On that dumb silence, came no way-
farer,
And once the covering which concealed
our load
Slipped down, and left the ghastly
blood-stained thing
Open to prying eyes, but none were
there ;
And then the darkling river, and the
sound

<p>When, with lead coiled around it, the dead corpse Sank with a sullen plunge within the deep, And took with it the tokens of our crime.</p>	<p>The petty crafts which make the pleader's art, The dolts who sit in judgment, when the one Who knows all must be silent ; but you know not</p>
<p>" Then with a something of relief, as those Who have passed through some great peril all unharmed, We went and burned the blood-stained signs of death, And left the dreadful place, and once more sped To Paris and to sleep, till the new day, Now risen to high noon, touched our sad dreams.</p>	<p>The intolerable burden of suspense, The hard and hateful gaze of hungry eyes Which gloat upon your suffering. When doom came It was well to know the worst, and hear no more The half-forgotten horrors. But I think The sense of common peril, common wrong,</p>
<p>" And that day, since we could not work as yet, We to the Picture Gallery went, and there We took our fill of nude voluptuous limbs, Mingled with scenes of horror bathed in blood, Such as our painters love. So week by week, Careless and unafraid, we spent our days,</p>	<p>Knits us in unity indissoluble, Closer than years of converse. When my husband, Braving his doom, embraced me as he went : " Wife, so thou live I care not,' all my heart Went out to him for a moment, and I cried, " Let me die too, my guilt is more than his.'</p>
<p>Till when that sad night faded ; swift there rose, Bursting the weights that kept it, the pale corpse, A damning witness from the deep, and brought. The dreadful past again, and with it doom.</p>	<p>" Some quibble marred the sentence, and once more The miserable tale was told afresh : Once more I stood before those hungry eyes, And when 'twas done we went forth slaves for life, Both with an equal doom, and ever since We suffer the same pains in solitude, Slaves fettered fast, whom only death sets free.</p>
<p>" You know how we were tried, and how things went, The treasoning speeches, the brow-beat- ing judge,</p>	<p>" That is my tale told truly. Now you know,</p>

Sir, of what fashion I am made : a woman
 Gentle, you see, and mild eyed. If I sinned
 Surely there was temptation, and I sought
 Such reparation as I could. There are here
 Tigresses, and not women, black of brow
 And strong of arm, who have struck down or stabbed
 Husband, or child, or lover, not as I,
 But driven by rage and jealousy, and drink,
 These creatures of the devil, as I pass
 I see them shrink and shudder. The young priest
 Of the prison, a well-favoured lad he is,
 When I confessed to him bore on his brow
 Cold drops of agony ; the Sister grew So pale at what I told her, that I thought
 She was like to swoon away, until I soothed her.
 Poor wretch, she has much to learn ; and here I am,
 And shall be till my hair turns grey, my eyes
 Grow dim, and I have clean forgotten all
 That brought me here, and all my former life
 Fades like a once-heard tale. In the long nights,
 As I lie alone in my cell like any nun,
 I wake sometimes with a start, and seem to hear
 That rusty lock turn, and those echoing feet

Down that dark passage, and I seem to see
 The dreadful stare of those despairing eyes,
 And then there sounds, a plunge in the deep, and I Lie shivering till the dawn. I have no comfort,
 Except the holy Mass ; for see you, sir,
 I was devout until they scoffed at me. And now I know there is a hell indeed,
 Since this place is on earth. I do not think
 I have much cause to fear death, should it come ;
 For whoso strives for Duty, all the Saints
 And the Madonna needs must love, and I,
 I have done what penitence could do ; and here *
 What have I of reward ?—my children taken
 As clean from me as if they were dead indeed,
 Trained to forget their mother. Sir, I see,
 Beyond these shallow phantasms of life ;
 And this I hold, that one whose conscience shows As clear as mine must needs be justified.
 I love the holy Mass, and take the Host
 As often as I may, being of good heart.
 For what was it she did in Holy Writ, The Kenite's wife of old ? I do not read
 That women shrank from her because she drove

The nail through her guest's brain ;
 may, rather, praise
Was hers : yet was she not betrayed
 as I,
Nor yet repentant of her wrong and
 seeking
To do what good was left. But look
 you, sir,
If I was once repentant, that is past :
I hate those black-browed women, who
 turn from me,
That smooth priest and that poor fool
 with her cross,
And that strange pink-and-whiteness
 of the nun.
And sometimes when they come I let
 them hear
Such things as make the pious hypocrites
 turn
And cross themselves. And for that
 tigress crew,
If I might only steal to their cells at
 night
With a knife, I would teach them,
 what it is to stab ;
Or even without one, that these little
 hands
Can strangle with the best.

Ah, you draw back,
You too are shocked forsooth. Listen,
 you wretch,
Who are walking free while I am
 prisoned here :
How many thoughts of murder have
 you nursed
Within your miserable heart ! how
 many
Low, foul desires which would degrade
 the brute !
Do you think I do not know you men ?
 What was it
That kept your hands unstained, but
 accident ?—

Accident, did I say ? or was it rather
Cowardice, that you feared the stripes
 of the law,
And did not dare to do your will or
 die ?—
Accident ! then, I pray you, where the
 merit
To have abstained ? Or if you claim,
 indeed,
Such precious self-restraint as keeps
 your feet
From straying, where the credit ? since
 it came
A gift as much unearned as other's ill,
Which lurked for them a little tiny
 speck
Hidden in the convolutions of the
 brain,
To grow with their growth, and wax
 with their years, and leave
The wretch at last in Hell. Do you
 deem it just,
The Potter with our clay upon His
 wheel
Should shape it in such form ? I love
 not God,
Being such ; I hate Him rather : I,
 His creature,
I do impugn His justice or His power,
I will not feign obedience—I, a
 woman,
Of a soft nature, who would love my
 love,
And my child, and nothing more ; who
 am, instead,
A murderer, as they tell me, pining
 here
In hell before my time."

Even as the spake
I seemed to be again as when I saw
The murderer of old time ; and once
again

Within that modern prison, blank and white,
There came the viewless trouble in the air
Which took her, and the sweep of wings unseen,
And terrible sounds which swooped on her and hushed
Her voice and seemed to occupy her soul
With horror and despair; and as I passed
The crucifix within the corridor,
"How long?" I cried, "How long?"

And one colossal idol; on its face
A changeless sneer, blighting the solitude.

PICTURES—III.

THE sad slow dawn of winter; frozen trees
And trampled snow within a lonely wood;
One shrouded form, which to the city flees;
And one, a masquer, lying in his blood.

A fair girl half undraped, who blithely sings;
Her white robe poised upon one budding breast;
While at her side, invisible, unconfessed,
Love folds her with the shelter of his wings.

Black clouds embattled on a lurid sky,
And one keen flash, like an awakened soul,
Piercing the hidden depths, while momently
One waits to hear enormous thunders roll.

A full sun blazing with unclouded day,
Till the bright waters mingle with the sky;
And on the dazzling verge, uplifted high;
White sails mysterious slowly pass away.

Two helpless girls upon a blazing wall,
The keen flames leaping always high and higher;
But faster, faster than the hungry fire,
Brave hearts which climb to save them ere they fall.

Hidden in a trackless and primeval wood,
Long-buried temples of an unknown race,

A youthful martyr, looking to the skies
From rack and stake, from torment and disgrace;
And suddenly heaven opened to his eyes,
A beckoning hand, a tender heavenly face.

A home on a fair English hill ; away
Stretch undulating plains, now gold
now green,
With park and lake and glade, and
homestead grey ;
And crowning all, the blue sea dimly
seen.

—
A lifeless, voiceless, world of age-long
snow,
Where winter crawls on slow through
endless night,
And safe within a low hut's speck of
light,
Strong souls alert and hopeful, by the
glow.

—
A great ship forging slowly from the
shore,
And on the broad deck weeping figures
bent ;
And on the gliding pierhead, sorrow-
spent,
Those whom the voyagers shall see no
more.

CONFESSiON.

WHO is there but at times has seen,
While his past days before him stand,
In all the chances which have been,
The guidance of a hidden Hand,

Which still has ruled his growing life,
Through weal and woe, through joy
and pain,
Through fancied good, through useless
strife,
And empty pleasure sought in vain ;

Which often has withheld the meed
He longed for once, with yearnings
blind,

And given the truest prize indeed,
The harvest of a blessed mind :

And so accepts the common lot
Content, whate'er the Ruler would,
Since all that has been, or has not,
Springs from a hidden root of good ?

* * * * *
Yet some there are maybe to-day,
Whose childhood at the mother's knee
Was taught to bow itself and pray,
Nor ever thirsted to be free,

Who now, 'mid warring voices loud,
Have lost the faith they held before,
Nor through the jangling of the crowd
Can hear the earlier message more.

A brute Fate vexes them, the reign
Of dumb laws, speeding onward still,
Regardless of the waste and pain,
Which all the labouring earth do fill.

They look to see the rule of Right ;
They find it not, and in its stead
But slow survivals, born of Might,
And all the early Godhead dead ;

They see it not, and droop and faint
And are unhappy, doubting God ;
Yet every step their feet have trod
Was trodden before them by a saint.

* * * * *
Oh, doubting soul, look up, behold
The eternal heavens above thy head,
The solid earth beneath, its mould
Compacted of the unnumbered dead.

Here the eternal problems grow,
And with each day are solved and done,

When some spent life, like melting
snow,
Breathes forth its essence to the sun.

As death is, life is—without end;
Wrong with right mingles, joy with
pain;
Forbid two meeting streams to blend,
'Twere not more hopeless, nor more
vain.

Though Death with Life, though Wrong
with Right,
Are bound within the scheme of things,
Yet can our souls, on soaring wings,
Gain to a loftier purer height,

Where death is not, nor any life,
Nor right nor wrong, nor joy nor pain;
But changeless Being, lacking strife,
Doth through all change, unchanged
remain.

Should Wrong prevail o'er all the
earth,
'Twere nought if only we discern
The one great truth, which if we learn,
All else beside is little worth.

That Right, is that which must prevail,
If not here, there, if not now, then,
Is the one Truth which shall not fail,
For all the doubts and fears of men.

What if a myriad ages still
Of wrong and pain, of waste and blood,
Confuse our thought, triumphant Good
At length, at last, our souls can fill

With such assurance as the Voice
Which from the fiery mountain pealed,
And bade the kneeling hosts rejoice
That God was in His laws revealed.

Nay even might our thought conceive
The final victory of Ill,
Not so, were it folly to believe
That Right is higher, purer still.

Who knows the Eternal "Ought"
knows well
That whoso loves and seeks the Right,
For him God shines with changeless
light,
Ay, to the lowest deeps of Hell.

And whoso knoweth God indeed,
The fixed foundations of his creed
Know neither changing nor decay,
Though all creation pass away.

LOVE UNCHANGED.

My love, my love, if I were old,
My body bent, my blood grown cold,
With thin white hairs upon my brow,
Say wouldst thou think of me as now?
Wouldst thou cling to me still,
As down life's sloping hill
We came at last through the unresting
years?

Art thou prepared for tears,
For time's sure-coming losses,
For life's despites and crosses,
My love, my love?

Ah! brief our little, little day;
Ah! years that fleet so fast away;
Before our summer scarce begun,
Look, spring and blossom-tide are
done!

When all things hasten past,
How should love only last?
How should our souls alone unchanged
remain?—
Come pleasure or come pain,

In days of joy and gladness,
In years of grief and sadness,
Love shall be love !

AT THE END.

WHEN the five gateways of the soul
Are closing one by one,
When our being's currents slowly roll
And day is done,
What shall our chiefest comfort be
Amid this misery ?

Not to have stores heaped up on high
Of gold and precious things,
Not to have flown from sky to sky
On Fame's wide wings,—
These things a little space do last,
And then are overpast.

Nor to have worked with patient brain
In senate or in mart,
To have gained the meed which those
attain

Who have played their part,—
Effort is fair, success is sweet,
But leave life incomplete.

Nor to have said, as the fool says,
“ Be merry, soul, rejoice ;
“ Thou hast laid up store for many days.”

Oh, foolish voice !
Already at thy gate the feet
Of the corpse-bearers meet.

Nor to have heaped up precious store
Of all the gains of time,
Of long-dead sages' treasured lore,
Or deathless rhyme,—
Though Learning be a comely maid,
Death maketh her afraid.

Nor to have drained the cup of youth,
To the sweet maddening lees ;
Nor, rapt by dreams of Hidden Truth,
To have spurned all these ;—
Pleasure, Denial, touch not him
Whose body and mind are dim.

Not one of all these things shall I
For comfort use, or strength,
When the sure hour, when I must die,
Takes me at length ;
One thought alone shall bring redress
For that great heaviness :—

That I have held each struggling soul
As of one kin and blood,
That one sure link doth all control
To one close brotherhood ;
For who the race of men doth love,
Loves also Him above.

THREE BRETON POEMS.

I.

*THE ORPHAN GIRL OF
LANNION.*

In seventeen hundred and eighty-three,
To Lannion came dole and misery.

Mignon an orphan, as good as fair,
Served in the little hostelry there.

One darkling night, when the hour was
late,
Two travellers rang at the outer gate.

“ Quick, hostess ! supper, red wine,
and food ;
We have money to pay, so that all be
good.”

When they had drunken enough, and "No teacher had I, neither priest nor
more,

"Here is white money to pay the score. There was no one to teach me on earth,
not one.

"And now shall your little serving-
maid come,
With her lantern lighted, to guide us
home!"

"Gentles, in all our wide Brittany
There is no man would harm her, so let
it be."

Forth went the maid, full of innocent
pride,
Fearless and free, with her light by her
side.

* * * * *
When they were far on their lonely
way,
They began to whisper, and mutter,
and say,

"Little maid, your face is as fair and
bright
As the foam on the wave in the morn-
ing light."

"Gentles, I pray you, flatter me not :
It is as God made it—no other, God
wot ;

"And were it fairer, I tell you true—
Ay, a hundred times fairer—'twere
nought to you."

"To judge, little maid, by your sober
speech,
You know all the good priests at the
school can teach ;

"To judge from your accents, discreet
and mild,
You were bred in the convent cloister,
my child."

"No teacher had I, neither priest nor
nun ;

"There was no one to teach me on earth,
not one.

"But while by my father's poor hearth
I wrought,
God filled me with many a holy
thought."

"Set down your lantern and put out
the light.
Here is gold : none can help you, 'tis
dead of night."

"Good sirs ! for my brother the young
priest's sake ;
If he heard such sayings his heart would
break."

* * * * *
"Oh, plunge me down fathoms deep in
the sea,
Of your mercy, rather than this thing
be !

"Rather than this—'twere a lighter
doom—

Oh bury me quick in a living tomb !"

* * * * *
The motherly hostess, sore afraid,
Waited in vain for her little maid.

She watched by the chill hearth's flicker-
ing light
Till the bell tolled twice through the
black dead night.

Then cried, "Up, serving-men, sleep
no more !
Help !—little maid Mignon lies drowned
in gore."

* * * * *

By the cross she lay dead, in the dead
cold night,
But beside her her lantern was still
alight !

II.

THE FOSTER BROTHER.

Of all the noble damsels, in all our
Brittany,
Gwennola was the sweetest far, a maiden
fair to see.

Scarce eighteen summers shed their
gold upon her shapely head,
Yet all who loved the fair girl best were
numbered with the dead—

Her father and her mother, and eke
her sisters dear.

Ah ! Mary, pity 'twas to see her shed
the bitter tear

At her casement in the castle, where a
step-dame now bare sway,
Her dim eyes fixed upon the sea, which
glimmered far away.

For three long years she watched in
vain, in dole and misery,
To see her foster brother's sail rise up
from under sea ;

For three long years she watched in
vain, hoping each day would send
The only heart which beat to hers, her
lover and her friend.

"Go, get you gone and tend the kine,"
the cruel step-dame said ;
"Leave brooding over long-past years :
go; earn your daily bread."

She woke her, ere the darkling dawns,
while yet 'twas dead of night,
To sweep the floors and cleanse the
house, and set the fires alight ;

To fetch the water from the brook,
again and yet again,
With heavy toil and panting breath,
and young form bent in twain.

One darkling winter morning, before
the dawning light,
With ringing hoofs, across the brook
there rode a noble knight :

"Good morrow, gracious maiden, and
art thou free to wed ?"
And she, so young she was and meek,
"I know not, sir," said she.

"I prithee tell me, maiden, if thou art
fancy-free ?"
"To none, sir, have I plighted yet my
maiden troth," said she.

"Then take, fair maid, this ring of
gold, and to your step-dame say,
That to-day your troth is plighted to a
knight from far away ;

"That at Nantes a battle fierce was
fought, wherein his squire was
slain,
And he himself lies stricken sore upon
his bed of pain ;

"But when three weeks are overpast,
whatever fate betide,
He will come himself full gallily, and
claim thee for his bride."

Affrighted ran she to her home, when,
Lo, a wondrous thing !
For on her slender finger blazed her
foster brother's ring.

II.

The weeks crept onward slowly, crept
slowly—one, two, three ;
But never came the young knight, no
never more came he.

Come, it is time that you were wed,
for I have sought for you
A bridegroom fitted to your rank, an
honest man and true."

"Nay, nay, I prithee, step-dame, there
is none that I can wed,
Only my foster brother dear I love,
alive or dead.

"With this ring his troth he plighted,
and whatever fate betide,
He will come himself full gaily, and
claim me for his bride."

"Peace, with thy golden wedding-ring !
peace, fool, or I will teach
With blows thy senseless chattering
tongue to hold discreeter speech ;

"To-morrow thou shalt be the bride,
whether thou wilt or not,
Of Giles the neat-herd, honest man :
ay, this shall be thy lot."

"Of Giles the neat-herd, maidst thou ?
oh, I shall die of pain !
Oh mother, dear dead mother, that thou
wert in life again !"

"Go, cry and wail without the house ;
go, feed on misery :
Go, take thy fill of moans and tears, for
wedded thou shalt be."

III.

Just then the ancient sexton, with the
bell that tolls the dead,
Went up and down the country side,
and these the words he said :—

"Pray for the soul of one who was a
brave and loyal knight,
Who bare at Nantes a grievous hurt,
what time they fought the fight :

"To-morrow eve, at set of sun, amid
the gathering gloom,
From the white church they bear him
forth, to rest within the tomb."

IV.

"Thou art early from the wedding
feast !" "Good truth, I could
not stay ;
I dared not see the piteous sight, and
therefore turned away ;

"I could not bear the pity and the
horror in her eyne,
As she stood so fair, in blank despair,
within the sacred shrine.

"Around the hapless maiden, all were
weeping bitterly,
And the good old rector at the church,
a heavy heart had he ;

"Not a dry eye was around her, save
the step-dame stern alone,
Who looked on with an evil smile, as
from a heart of stone ;

"And when the ringers rang a peal, as
now they came again,
And the women whispered comfort, yet
her heart seemed rent in twain.

"High in the place of honour at the
marriage feast she sate,
Yet no drop of water drank she, and
no crumb of bread she ate;

"And when at last, the feast being
done, they would light the bride
to bed,
The ring from off her hand she flung,
the wreath from off her head,

"And with wild eyes that spoke de-
spair, and locks that streamed
behind,
Into the darkling night she fled, as
swiftly as the wind."

v.

The lights within the castle were out,
and all asleep ;
Only, with fever in her brain, the maid
would watch and weep.

The chamber door swung open. "Who
goes there?" "Do not fear,
Gwen; 'tis I, your foster brother."
"Oh! at last, my love, my
dear!"

He raised her to the saddle, and his
strong arm clasped her round,
As, through the night, his charger white
flew on without a sound.

"How fast we go, my brother!"
"Tis a hundred leagues and
more."

"How happy am I, happier than in all
my life before!"

"And have we far to go, brother? I
would that we were come."

"Have patience, sister; hold me fast;
'tis a long way to our home."

The white owl shrieked around them,
the wild things shrank in fear
As through the night a cloud of light
that ghostly steed drew near.

"How swift your charger is, brother!
and your armour oh, how bright!
Ah, no more you are a boy, brother,
but in troth a noble knight!

"How beautiful you are, brother! but
I would that we were come."

"Have patience, sister; hold me fast;
we are not far from home."

"Your breath is icy-cold, brother, your
locks are dank and wet;
Your heart, your hands are icy-cold;
oh! is it further yet?"

"Have patience, sister; hold me fast;
for we are nearly there;
Hast thou not our marriage bells
ring through the midnight air?"

Even with the word, that ghostly steed
neighed suddenly and shrill,
Then trembled once through every limb,
and like a stone stood still.

And lo, within a land they were, a land
of mirth and pleasure,
Where youths and maidens hand in
hand danced to a joyous mea-
sure;

A verdant orchard closed them round
With golden fruit bedight,
And above them, from the heaven-kissed hills, came shafts of golden
light ;

Hard by, a cool spring bubbled clear,
A fountain without stain,
Whereof the dead lips tasting, grew
warm with life again.

There was Gwennola's mother mild,
And eke her sisters dear :
Oh, land of joy and bliss and love !—
oh, land without a tear !

VI.

But when the next sun on the earth,
Brake from the gathered gloom,
From the white church, the young
maids bore, the virgin to her
tomb.

III.

AZENOR.

"SEAMEN, seamen, tell me true,
Is there any of your crew
Who in Armor town has seen
Azenor the kneeling queen ?"

"We have seen her oft indeed,
Kneeling in the self-same place ;
Brave her heart, though pale her face,
White her soul, though dark her weed."

I.

Of a long-past summer's day
Envoy came from far away,
Mailed in silver, clothed with gold,
High on snorting chargers bold.

When the warden spied them near,
To the King he went, and cried,
"Twelve bold knights come pricking
here :
Shall I open to them wide ?"

"Opened let the great gates be ;
See the knights are welcomed all ;
Spread the board and deck the hall,
We will feast them royally."

"By our Prince's high command,
Who one day shall be our King,
We come to ask a precious thing—
Azenor your daughter's hand."

"Gladly will we grant your prayer :
Brave the youth, as we have heard.
Tall is she, milkwhite and fair,
Gentle as a singing bird."

Fourteen days high feast they made,
Fourteen days of dance and song ;
Till the dawn the harpers played ;
Mirth and joyance all day long.

"Now, my fair spouse, it is meet
That we turn us toward our home."
"As you will, my love, my sweet ;
Where you are, there I would come."

II.

When his step-dame saw the bride,
Well-nigh choked with spleen was she :
"This pale-faced girl, this lump of
pride—
And shall she be preferred to me ?"

"New things please men best, 'tis true,
And the old are cast aside.
Nathless, what is old and tried
Serves far better than the new."

Scarce eight months had passed away
When she to the Prince would come,
And with subtlety would say,
"Would you lose both wife and
home ?

" Have a care, lest what I tell
Should befall you ; it were best
To have a care and guard you well,
'Ware the cuckoo in your nest."

" Madam, if the truth you tell,
Meet reward her crime shall earn,
First the round tower's straitest cell,
Then in nine days she shall burn."

III.

When the old King was aware,
Bitter tears the greybeard shed.
Tore in grief his white, white hair,
Crying, "Would God that I were dead."

And to all the seamen said,
" Good seamen, pray you tell me true,
Is there, then, any one of you
Can tell me if my child be dead ?".

" My liege, as yet alive is she,
Though burned to-morrow shall she be :
But from her prison tower, O King !
Morning and eve we hear her sing.

" Morning and eve, from her fair throat
Issues the same sweet plaintive note,
'They are deceived ; I kiss Thy rod :
Have pity on them, O my God !'"

IV.

Even as a lamb who gives its life
All meekly to the cruel knife,
White-robed she went, her soft feet
bare,
Self-shrouded in her golden hair,

And as she to her dreadful fate
Fared on, poor innocent, meek and
mild,
" Grave crime it were," cried small and
great,
" To slay the mother and the child."

All wept sore, both small and great ;
Only the step-dame smiling sate :
" Sure 'twere no evil deed, but good,
To kill the viper with her brood."

" Quick, good firemen, fan the fire
Till it leap forth fierce and red ;
Fan it fierce as my desire :
She shall burn till she is dead."

Vain their efforts, all in vain,
Though they fanned and fanned again ;
The more they blew, the embers gray
Faded and sank and died away.

When the judge the portent saw,
Dazed and sick with fear was he :
" She is a witch, she flouts the law ;
Come, let us drown her in the sea."

V.

What saw you on the sea ? A boat
Neither by sail nor oarsman sped ;
And at the helm, to watch it float,
An angel white with wings outspread ;

A little boat, far out to sea,
And with her child a fair ladye,
Whom at her breast she sheltered well,
Like a white dove upon a shell.

She kissed, and clasped, and kissed
again
His little back, his little feet,
Crooning a soft and tender strain,
" Da-da, my dear ; da-da, my sweet.

" Ah, could your father see you, sweet,
A proud man should he be to-day ;
But we on earth may never meet,
But he is lost and far away."

VI.

In Armor town is such affright
As never castle knew before,
For at the midmost hour of night
The wicked step-dame is no more.

" I see hell open at my side :
Oh, save me, in God's name, my son !
Your spouse was chaste ; 'twas I who lied ;
Oh, save me, for I am undone ! "

Scarce had she checked her lying tongue,
A viper from her lips would glide,
With threatening fangs, which hissed
and stung,

And pierced her marrow till she died.

Elsewhere, to foreign realms the knight
Went forth, by land and over sea ;
Seeking in vain his lost delight,
O'er all the round, round world went he.

He sought her East, he sought her West,
Next to the hot South sped he forth,
Then, after many a fruitless quest,
He sought her in the gusty North.

There by some nameless island vast,
His anchor o'er the side he cast ;

When by a brooklet's fairy spray,
He spies a little lad at play.

Fair are his locks, and blue his eyes,
As his lost love's or as the sea ;
The good knight looking on them, sighs,
" Fair child, who may thy father be ? "

" Sir, I have none save Him in heaven :
Long years ago he went away,
Ere I was born, and I am seven ;
My mother mourns him night and day."

" Who is thy mother, child, and where ? "

" She cleanses linen white and fair,
In yon clear stream." " Come, child,
and we

Together will thy mother see."

He took the youngling by the hand,
And, as they passed the yellow strand,
The child's swift blood in pulse and arm

Leapt to his father's and grew warm.

" Rise up and look, oh mother dear :
It is my father who is here :
My father who was lost is come—
Oh, bless God for it ! —to his home."

They knelt and blessed His holy name,
Who is so good, and just, and mild,
Who joins the sire and wife and child :
And so to Brittany they came.

And may the blessed Trinity,
Protect all toilers on the sea !

G Y C I A .

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

PEOPLE OF BOSPHORUS.

The King of Bosphorus.

Asander, Prince of Bosphorus.

Lysimachus, a statesman.

Megacles, a chamberlain from the Imperial Court of Constantinople.

Three Courtiers, accompanying Asander.

Soldiers, etc.

PEOPLE OF CHERSON.

Lamachus, Archon of the Republic of Cherson.

Zetho, his successor.

Thiodorus, a young noble (brother to Irene), in love with Cycia.

Bardanes, first Senator.

Ambassador to Bosphorus.

The Senators of Cherson.

Two Labourers.

Cycia, daughter of Lamachus.

Irene, a lady—her friend, in love with Asander.

Melissa, an elderly lady in waiting on Cycia.

Child, daughter of the Gaoler.

Citizens, etc.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—BOSPHORUS. THE KING'S PALACE.

The King, in anxious thought. To him Lysimachus, afterwards Asander.

Enter Lysimachus.

Lys. What ails the King, that thus his brow is bent
By such a load of care?

King. Lysimachus,
The load of empire lies a weary weight,

On age-worn brains; tho' skies and seas may smile,
And steadfast favouring Fortune sit serene,
Guiding the helm of State, but well thou knowest—
None better in my realm—through what wild waves,
Quicksands, and rock-fanged straits,
Laden with all our love, reels madly on
To shipwreck and to ruin. From the North,
Storm-cloud on storm-cloud issuing volleys forth

Fresh thunderbolts of war. The Emperor
Dallies within his closed seraglios,
Letting his eunuchs waste the might
of Rome,
While the fierce Scythian, in a surge of
blood,
Bursts on our bare-swept plains. Upon
the South,
Our rival Cherson, with a jealous eye,
Waits on our adverse chances, taking
joy
Of her republican guile in every check
And buffet envious Fortune deals our
State,
Which doth obey a King. Of all our
foes
I hate and dread these chiefly, for I fear
Lest, when my crown falls from my
palsied brow,
My son Asander's youth may prove too
weak
To curb these crafty burghers. Speak,
I pray thee,
Most trusty servant. Can thy loyal
brain
Devise some scheme whereby our dear-
loved realm
May break the mesh of Fate?

Lys. Indeed, my liege,
Too well I know our need, and long
have tossed
Through sleepless nights, if haply I
might find
Some remedy, but that which I have
found
Shows worse than the disease.

King. Nay, speak; what is it?
I knew how wise thy thought.

Lys. My liege, it chanceth
The Archon Lamachus is old and spent.
He has no only child, a daughter,
Gycia.

The treasure of his age, who now
blooms forth
In early maidenhood. The girl is
fair
As is a morn in springtide; and her
father
A king in all but name, such reverence
His citizens accord him. Were it not
well
The Prince Asander should contract
himself
In marriage to this girl, and take the
strength
Of Cherson for her dowry, and the
power
Of their strong fleets and practised arms
to thrust
The invading savage backward?

King. Nay, my lord;
No more of this, I pray. There is no
tribe
Of all the blighting locust-swarms of
war,
Which sweep our wasted fields, I would
not rather
Take to my heart and cherish than
these vipers.
Dost thou forget, my lord, how of old
time,
In the brave days of good Sauromatus,
These venomous townsmen, shame-
lessly allied
With the barbarian hosts, brought us
to ruin;
Or, with the sailing force of Caesar
leagued,
By subtle devilish enginery of war,
Robbed Bosphorus of its own, when,
but for them,
Byzantium were oar prey, and all its
might,
And we Rome's masters? Nay; I
swear to thee,

I would rather see the Prince dead at my feet, Not more than is my mind ; I cannot reason.

I would rather see our loved State sunk and lost, But hark ! I hear the ring of coursers' feet

Than know my boy, the sole heir of my crown, Bespeak Asander coming. What an

The sole hope of my people, taken and noosed Of youth and morning breathes round him, and brings

By this proud upstart girl. Speak not A light of hope again !

Ruin were better far.

Lys. My liege, I bear No greater favour to these insolent townsmen

Than thou thyself. I, who have fought with them

From my first youth—who saw my father slain,

Not in fair fight, pierced through by honest steel,

But unawares, struck by some villainous engine,

Which, armed with inextinguishable fire,

Flew hissing from the walls and slew at once

Coward and brave alike ; I, whose young brother,

The stripling who to me was as a son, Taken in some sally, languished till he died,

Chained in their dungeons' depths ;— must I not hate them

With hate as deep as hell ? And yet I know

There is no other way than that Asander

Should wed this woman. This alone can staunch

The bleeding wounds of the State.

King. Lysimachus, I am old ; my will is weak, my body bent,

Of youth and morning breathes round him, and brings

A light of hope again !

Enter ASANDER from the chase.

Asan. My dearest sire and King, art thou thus grave

Of choice, or does our good Lysimachus, Bringing unwonted loads of carking care,

O'ercloud thy brow ? I prithee, father, fret not ;

There is no cloud of care I yet have known—

And I am now a man, and have my cares—

Which the fresh breath of morn, the hungry chase,

The echoing horn, the jocund choir of tongues,

Or joy of some bold enterprise of war,

When the swift squadrons smite the echoing plains,

Scattering the stubborn spearmen, may not break,

As does the sun the mists. Nay, look not grave ;

My youth is strong enough for any burden

Fortune can cast on me.

King. Couldst thou, Asander, Consent to serve the State, if it should bid thee

Wed without love ?

Asan. What, father, is that all ?

I do not know this tertian fever, love,

Of which too oft my comrades groan
and sigh,
This green-sick blight, which turns a
lusty soldier
To a hysterical girl. Wed without
love?
One day I needs must wed, though
love I shall not.
And if it were indeed to serve the
State,
Nay, if 'twould smooth one wrinkle
from thy brow,
Why, it might be to-morrow. Tell me,
father,
Who is this paragon that thou designest
Shall call me husband? Some bar-
barian damsel
Reared on mare's milk, and nurtured
in a tent
In Scythia? Well, 'twere better than
to mate
With some great lady from the Imperial
Court,
Part tigress and all wanton. I care
not;
Or if the scheme miscarry, I care
not.
Tell me, good father.

King. Wouldst thou wed, Asander,
If 'twere to save the State, a Greek
from Cherson?

Asan. From Cherson? Nay, my
liege; that were too much.
A girl from out that cockatrice's den—
Take such a one to wife? I would
liefer take
A vapor to my breast! Nay, nay, you
jest,
My father, for you hate this low-born
crew,
Grown gross by huckstering ways and
sordid craft—
Ay, more than I.

King. It is no jest, my son.
Our good Lysimachus will tell thee all
Our need and whence it comes.
Lys. My gracious Prince,
Thus stands the case, no otherwise.
Our foes
Press closer year by year, our wide-
spread plains
Are ravaged, and our bare, unpopl'd
fields
Breed scantier levies; while the trea-
sury
Stands empty, and we have not means
to buy
The force that might resist them.
Nought but ruin,
Speedy, inevitable, can await
Our failing Bosphorus' unaided strength,
Unless some potent rich ally should
join
Our weakness to her might. None
other is there
To which to look but Cherson; and I
know,
From trusty friends among them, that
even now,
Perchance this very day, an embassy
Comes to us with design that we should
sink
Our old traditional hate in the new
bonds
Which Hymen binds together. For
the girl
Gycia, the daughter of old Lamachus,
Their foremost man, there comes but
one report—
That she is fair as good.
Asan. My lord, I pray you,
Waste not good breath. If I must sell
myself,
It matters not if she be fair or foul,
Angel or doubly damned; hating the
race,

Men, maidens, young and old, I would
blight my life
To save my country.

King. Thanks, my dearest son.
There spake a patriot indeed.

Servant. My liege,
An embassy from Cherson for the King.

Enter Ambassador, with retinue.

Ambas. Sirs, I bring you a message
from Lamachus, the Archon of Cher-
son.

Lys. Sirs, forsooth ! Know ye not
the dignity of princes, or does your
republican rudeness bar you from all
courtesy ? I do not count myself equal
to the King, nor, therefore should you.

King. Nay, good Lysimachus, let
him proceed.

Ambas. If I am blunt of speech, I
beg your forgiveness. I bring to you
a letter from the citizen Lamachus,
which I shall read, if it be your
pleasure.

King. Read on.

Ambas. " To the King of Bosphorus,
Lamachus sends greeting. We are
both old. Let us forget the former
enmities of our States, and make an
alliance which shall protect us against
the storm of barbarian invasion which
Caesar is too weak to ward off. Thou
hast a son, and I a daughter. Thy son
is, from all report, a brave youth and
worthy. My daughter is the paragon
of her sex. I have wealth and posses-
sions and respect as great as if I were a
sceptred King. The youth and the
maid are of fitting age. Let us join
their hands together, and with them
those of our States, and grow strong
enough to defy the barbarians, and
Rome also."

Asan. My liege, I am willing for
this marriage. Let it be.

King. My son, we have not yet
heard all. Read on, sir.

Ambas. " There is one condition
which not my will, but the jealousy of
our people enforces, viz. that the Prince
Asander, if he weds my daughter, shall
thenceforth forswear his country, nor
seek to return to it on pain of death.
I pray thee, pardon the rudeness of my
countrymen ; but they are Greeks, and
judge their freedom more than their
lives."

Asan. Insolent hounds !
This is too much. I will have none of
them.

Take back that message.

King. Thou art right, my son.
I could not bear to lose thee, not to
win
A thousand Chersons. Let us fight
alone,
And see what fortune sends us.

Lys. Good my liege,
Be not too hasty. (*To Ambassador*)
Sir, the King has heard
The message which you bring, and
presently
Will send a fitting answer. [*Exit Ambas-*

bassador. Nay, my liege,
I beg your patience. That these fellows
make
Their friendship difficult is true ; but
think
How great the value of it, and re-
member
How easy 'tis to promise and break
faith
With insolent dogs like these. This
Lamachus
Is older than your grace, and feckler far.

He will not live for ever, and, he gone,
Will not the Prince Asander be as
great,
The husband of his daughter and his
heir,
As *he* is now, and sway the power of
Cherson
For our own ends, and cast to all the
winds
This foul enforc'd compact, and o'er-
turn
This commonwealth of curs? I will
stake my life
That three years shall not pass ere he
is King
Of Cherson in possession, and at once
Of Bosphorus next heir.
"The tongue hath sworn, the mind
remains unsworn,"
So says their poet.

Asan. I'll have none of it.
I am not all Greek, but part Cimmerian,
And scorn to break my word."

Let us face ruin, father, not deceit.

King. My noble son, I love thee.

Lys. Good, my liege,
And thou, my Lord Asander, ponder
it.

Consider our poor country's gaping
wounds,
And what a remedy lies to our hands.
I will die willingly if I devise not
A scheme to bend these upstarts to
your will. [Exeunt omnes.]

SCENE II.—OUTSIDE THE PALACE.

MEGACLES and Courtiers.

Meg. Well, my lords, and so it is
all settled. We must all be on board
in half an hour. His Altitude the
Prince sails at once for Cherson, and

with a view to his immediate marriage.
Was ever such a rash step heard of?
Not twenty-four hours to get ready the
marriage equipment of a Prince of Bos-
phorus. Well, well, I dare say they
would be glad enough to take him with
no rag to his back. I dare say these
rascally republicans would know no
better if he were to be married in his
everyday suit.

1st Court. I' faith, I should never
have dreamt it. Asander, who is the
bulkiest huntsman and the bravest
soldier, and the best of good fellows,
to go and tie himself to the apron-
string of a Greek girl, a tradesman's
daughter from Cherson, of all places on
earth! Pah! it makes me sick!

2nd Court. But I hear she is beauti-
ful as Artemis, and— Well, we are
all young or have been, and beauty is
a strong lodestone to such metal as the
Prince's.

3rd Court. Nay, he has never set
eyes on her; and, for that matter, the
Lady Irene was handsome enough, in
all conscience, and a jovial young
gentlewoman to boot. Ye gods! do
you mind how she sighed for him and
pursued him? It was a sight to please
the goddess Aphrodite herself. But
then, our good Asander, who had only
to lift up his little finger, was so cold
and positively forbidding, that I once
came upon the poor lady crying her
eyes out in a passion of mortified
feeling.

1st Court. Ay, she was from this
outlandish Cherson, was not she?
Aphrodite was a Greek woman also,
remember.

2nd Court. So she was. I had
quite forgotten where the lady came

from. Well, if she's there now, and cannot get her Prince, and would like a gay, tolerably well-favoured young fellow for a lover, I suppose she need go no further than the present company.

Meg. My lords, I pray you leave these frivolities, and let us come to serious matters. Think, I beg you, in what a painful position I am placed. I am to go, without proper notice, as Master of the Ceremonies of the Court of Bosphorus, to conduct an important Court-ceremonial with a pack of scurvy knaves, who, I will be bound, hardly know the difference between an Illustrious and a Respectable, or a Respectable and an Honourable. I must do my best to arrange all decently and in order, and as near as may be to the Imperial model, and all these matters I have to devise on shipboard, tossed about on that villainous Euxine, with a smell of pitch everywhere, and seasickness in my stomach. And when I get to Cherson, if ever I do get there alive, I have not the faintest idea whom I am to consult with—whether there is a Count of the Palace or anybody, in fact. I dare say there is nobody; I am sure there is nobody. A marriage of the heir apparent is a very serious affair, let me tell you. What a comfort it is that I have got the last edition of that precious work of the divine Theodosius on Dignities! If it were not for that, I should go mad.

1st Court. My good Megacles, I warn you the Prince cares as little for etiquette as he does for love-making.

Meg. Very likely, and that makes my position so difficult. Just reflect for a moment. When we go ashore at

Cherson, I suppose we shall be received by the authorities?

2nd Court. Surely, good Megacles.

Meg. Then, how many steps should Prince Asander take to meet his father-in-law Lamachus—eh? And how many steps should Lamachus take? You never gave the matter a thought? Of course not. And these are questions to be settled on the spot, and scores like them.

3rd Court. I dare say it won't matter at all, or very little.

Meg. Matter very little, indeed! very little, forsooth! Why, in the name of all the saints, do not alliances fall through for less? Are not bloody wars fought for less? Do I not remember the sad plight of the Grand Chamberlain, when the Illustrious Leo, the Pro-Consul of Macedonia, had a meeting at Court with the Respectable the Vice-Prefect of Pannonia? Now, the Pro-Consul should have taken four steps forward, as being the most noble, the Vice-Prefect five. But, the Vice-Prefect being a tall man, and the Pro-Consul a short one; the Grand Chamberlain did not sufficiently measure their distances; and so when they had taken but four steps each, there were the two Dignitaries bolt upright, face to face, glaring at each other, and no room to take the fraction of a foot pace more.

1st Court. Faith, a very laughable situation, good Megacles. Was it hard to settle?

Meg. I should think it was hard to settle. No one could interfere; the Book of Ceremonies was sent for, and was silent. There was nothing for it but that the Emperor, after half an

hour, broke up the Court in confusion, and those two remained where they were till it was quite dark, and then they got away, no one knows how. But what came of it? For fifteen years there was war and bloodshed between the provinces, and but for the invasion of the Goths, there would be to this day. Matter little, indeed! Why, you foolish youngster, ceremony is everything in life. To understand Precedence aright is to know the secrets of nature. The order of Precedence is the order of Creation. It is, in fact, a very cosmogony. Oh, a noble science! a noble science!

1st Court. Right, good Megacles, to magnify your office. Bravery is nothing; goodness is nothing; beauty is a foolish dream. Give us Ceremony, Ceremony, more Ceremony; it is the salt of life.

Meg. A very intelligent youth. But here comes the King.

Enter the KING, ASANDER, and LYSIMACHUS.

Asan. My liege, I do your will, Though with a heavy heart. Farewell, my father.
If I must bid farewell to this dear City, Which nourished me from childhood, 'tis to save it,

Not otherwise, and thou my sire and King.
From thee I do not part, and often times,
If the saints will, I yet shall welcome thee,
When all our foes are routed and our troubles
Pled like some passing storm-cloud, to my hearth,

And set thy heir upon thy knees, a Prince

Of Bosphorus and Cherson.

King. Good, my son, I pray God keep you, for I dimly fear, So dark a presage doth obscure my mind,

That we shall meet no more.

Lys. My honoured liege, These are the figments of a mind which grief

Hath part disordered. Thou shalt see thy son,

Trust me for it; I swear it. One thing more

Remains. I know what 'tis to be a youth

As yet untouched by love; I know what charm

Lies in the magic of a woman's eyes
For a young virgin heart. I pray you, sir,

Swear to me by the saints, that, come what may,

For no allurement which thy new life brings thee,

The love of wife or child, wilt thou forget

Our Bosphorus, but still wilt hold her weak

Above all other objects of thy love
In good or adverse fortune.

Asan. Nay, my lord, There is no need for oaths; yet will I swear it,

Here on this soldier's cross.

[*Makes a cross with the hilt of his sword.* Farewell, my father,

I mar my manhood, staying.

King. Farewell, son. Let my old eyes fix on thee till thou goest

Beneath the farthest verge. Good
Megacles,
And you brave gentlemen, be faithful
all
To me and to your Prince.

Lys. My Lord Asander,
Remember !

ACT II.

SCENE I.—LAMACHUS' PALACE,
CHERSON.

GYCIA and IRENE.

Gycia. Sweetest Irene,
What joy it is to see thee once again
After so long an absence ! We had
grown
Together on one stalk so long, since
first
Our girlish lives began to burst to
flower,
That it was hard to part us. But methinks
That something of the rose from off
thy cheek
Has faded, and its rounded outline fair
Seems grown a little thinner.

Ire. Gycia,
The flower, once severed from the
stalk, no more
Grows as before.

Gycia. Thou strange girl, to put on
Such grave airs ! Ah ! I fear at Bos-
phorus
Some gay knight has bewitched thee ;
thou has fallen
In love, as girls say—though what it
may be
To fall in love, I know not, thank the
gods,
Having much else to think of.

Ire. Prithee, dear,
Speak not of this.

Gycia. Ah ! then I know 'tis true.
Confess what manner of thing love is.

Ire. Nay, nay, I cannot tell thee
(weeping), Gycia ;

Thou knowest not what thou naked.
What is love ?

Seek not to know it. 'Tis to be no
more

Thy own, but all another's ; 'tis to
dwell

By day and night on one fixed madding
thought,

Till the form wastes, and with the form
the heart

Is warped from right to wrong, and can
forget

All that it loved before, faith, duty,
country,

Friendship, affection—everything but
love.

Seek not to know it, dear ; or, knowing
it,

Be happier than I.

Gycia. My poor Irene !
Then, 'tis indeed a misery to love.

I do repent that I have tortured thee
By such unthinking jests. Forgive me,
dear,

I will speak no more of it ; with me
thy secret

Is safe as with a sister. Shouldst thou
wish

To unburden to me thy unhappy heart,
If haply I might bring thy love to thee.
Thou shalt his name divulge and
quality,

And I will do my best.

Ire. Never, dear Gycia.
Forget my weakness ; 'twas a passing
folly,

I love a man who loves me not again,

And that is very hell. I would die
sooner
Than breathe his name to thee. Fare-
well, dear lady !
Thou canst not aid me. [Exit IRENE.
Gycia. Hapless girl ! Praise
Heaven
That I am fancy-free !

Enter LAMACHUS.

Lama. My dearest daughter, why
this solemn aspect ?
I have glad news for thee. Thou
knowest of old
The weary jealousies, the bloody
feuds,
Which 'twixt our Cherson and her
neighbour City
Have raged ere I was born—nay, ere
my grandsire
First saw the light of heaven. Both
our States
Are crippled by this brainless enmity.
And now the Empire, now the Scythian,
threatens
Destruction to our Cities, whom,
united,
We might defy with scorn. Seeing
this weakness,
Thy father, wishful, ere his race be
run,
To save our much-loved Cherson, sent
of late
Politic envoys to our former foe,
And now—I' faith, I am not so old,
'twould seem
That I have lost my state-craft—comes
a message.
The Prince Asander, heir of Bos-
phorus,
Touches our shores to-day, and pre-
sently
Will be with us.

Gycia. Oh, father, is it wise ?
Do fire and water mingle ? Does the
hawk
Mate with the dove ; the tiger with the
lamb ;
The tyrant with the peaceful common-
wealth ;
Fair commerce with the unfruitful
works of war ?
What union can there be 'twixt our fair
city
And this half-barbarous race ? 'Twere
against nature
To bid these opposite elements com-
bine —
The Greek with the Cimmerian. Fa-
ther, pray you,
Send them away, with honour if you
please,
And soothing words and gifts—only, I
pray you,
Send them away, this Prince who doth
despise us,
And his false retinue of slaves.

Lama. My daughter,
Thy words are wanting in thy wonted
love
And dutiful observance. 'Twere an
insult
Unwashed by streams of bloodshed,
should our City
Scorn thus the guests it summoned.
Come they must,
And with all hospitable care and
honour,
Else were thy sire dishonoured. Thou
wilt give them
A fitting welcome.

Gycia. Pardon me, my father,
That I spoke rashly. I obey thy will.

[Going.
Lama. Stay, Gycia. Dost thou
know what 'tis to love ?

Gycia. Ay, thee, dear father.

Lama. Nay, I know it well.
But has no noble youth e'er touched
thy heart?

Gycia. None, father, Heaven be
praised! The young Irene
Was with me when thou cam'st, and
all her life
Seems blighted by this curse of love—
for one
Whose name she hides, with whom in
Bosphorus
She met, when there she sojourned.
Her young brother,
The noble Theodorus, whom thou
knowest,
Lets all the world go by him and grows
pale
For love, and pines, and wherefore?—

For thy daughter,
Who knows not what love means, and
cannot brook
Such brain-sick folly. Nay, be sure,
good father,
I love not thus, and shall not.

Lama. Well, well, girl,
Thou wilt know it yet. I fetter not
thy choice,
But if thou couldst by loving bind
together
Not two hearts only, but opposing
peoples;
Supplant by halcyon days long years of
strife,
And link them in unbroken harmony;—
Were this no glory for a woman, this
No worthy price of her heart?

Gycia. Tell me, I pray,
What mean you by this riddle?

Lama. Prince Asander
Comes here to ask your hand, and with
it takes
A gracious dower of peace and amity.

He does not ask thee to forsake thy
home,
But leaves for thee his own. All tongues
together
Are full of praise of him: vi:gin in love,
A brave youth in the field, as we have
proved
In many a mortal fight; a face and form
Like a young god's. I would, my love,
thy heart
Might turn to him, and find thy happiness
In that which makes me happy. I am
old
And failing, and I fain would see thee
blest
Before I die, and at thy knees an heir
To all my riches, and the State of
Cherson
From anxious cares delivered, and
through thee.
Gycia. Father, we are of the Athenian race,
Which was the flower of Hellas. Ours
the same
Of Poets, Statesmen, Orators, whose
works
And thoughts upon the forehead of mankind
Shine like a precious jewel; ours the
glory
Of those great Soldiers who by sea and
land
Scattered the foemen to the winds of
heaven,
First in the files of time. And though
our mother,
Our Athens, sank, crushed by the might
of Rome,
What is Rome now?—An Empire rent
in twain;
An Empire sinking 'neath the unwieldy
weight

Of its own power ; an Empire where
the Senate
Ranks lower than the Circus, and a
wanton
Degrades the Imperial throne. But
though to its fall
The monster totters, this our Cherson
keeps
The bravery of old, and still maintains
The old Hellenic spirit and some
likeness
Of the fair Commonwealth which ruled
the world.
Surely, my father, 'tis a glorious spring
Drawn from the heaven-kissed summits
whence we come ;
And shall we, then, desile our noble
blood
By mixture with this upstart tyranny
Which fouls the Hellenic pureness of
its source
In countless bastard channels ? If our
State
Ask of its children sacrifice, 'tis well.
It shall be given ; only I prithee,
father,
Seek not that I should with barbaric
blood
Taint the pure stream, which flows
from Pericles.
Let me abide unwedded, if I may,
A Greek girl as before.

Lama. Daughter, thy choice
Is free as air to accept or to reject
This suitor ; only, in the name of
Cherson,
Do nothing rashly, and meanwhile take
care
That nought that fits a Grecian State
be wanting
To do him honour.

Gycia. Sir, it shall be done.

SCENE II.—OUTSIDE THE PALACE
OF IAMACHUS.

MEGACLES and COURTIERS.

Meg. Well, my lords, and so this is
the palace. A grand palace, forsooth,
and a fine reception to match ! Why,
these people are worse than barbarians.
They are worse than the sea, and that
was inhospitable enough. The saints
be praised that that is over, at any rate.
Oh, the intolerable scent of pitch, and
the tossing and the heaving ! Heaven
spare me such an ordeal again ! I
thought I should have died of the
smells. And here, can it be ? Is it
possible that there is a distinct odour
of—pah ! what ? Oils, as I am a
Christian, and close to the very palace
of the Archon ! What a detestable
people ! Some civet, good friends,
some civet !

1st Court. Here it is, good Mega-
cles. You did not hope, surely, to find
republicans as sweet as those who live
cleanly under a King ? But here are
some of their precious citizens at last.

Enter CITIZENS hurriedly.

1st Citizen. I pray you, forgive us,
gentlemen. We thought the Prince
would take the land at the other quay,
and had prepared our welcome accord-
ingly.

Meg. Who are these men ?

1st Court. They are honourable
citizens of Cherson.

Meg. Citizens ! They will not do
for me. The Count of the Palace
should be here with the Grand Cham-
berlain to meet my Master.

1st Cit. Your Master ? Oh ! then
you are a serving man, as it would

seem. Well, my good man, when comes your Master?

Meg. Oh, the impertinent scoundrel! Do you know, sir, who I am?

1st Cit. Probably the Prince's attendant, his lackey, or possibly his steward. I neither know nor care.

Meg. Oh, you barbarian! Where is the Count of the Palace, I say?

1st Cit. Now, citizen, cease this nonsense. We have not, thank Heaven, any such foolish effeminate functionary.

Meg. No Count of the Palace? Heavens! what a crew! Well, if there is none, where are your leading nobles? where the Respectable and Illustrious? You are certainly not Illustrious nor Respectable; you probably are not even Honourable, or if you are you don't look it.

1st Cit. What, you wretched popinjay of a serving man! You dare address a Greek citizen in that way? Take that, and that! [Beats him.]

1st Court. Draw, gentlemen! These are Russians! [They fight.]

Enter ASANDER.

*Asan.** Put up your swords, gentlemen. Why, fellows, what is this? Is this your hospitality to your guests?

1st Cit. Nay, sir; but this servant of yours has been most-insolent, and has abused and insulted our State and its manners. He told us that we were not men of honour; and some of us, sir, are young, and have hot blood, and, as Greek citizens of Cherson, will not bear insults.

Asan. Insolent upstarts, you are not worthy of our swords! Come, my Lord Megacles, hood them not. Here is their master.

Enter LAMACHUS and Senators.

Lama. We bid you heartily welcome, Prince, to Cherson.

That we have seemed to fail to do you honour

Comes of the spite of fortune. For your highness,

Taking the land at the entrance of the port,

Misled what of scanty pomp our homely manners

Would fain have offered; but we pray you think

'Twas an untoward accident, no more. Welcome to Cherson, Prince!

Asan. Methinks, my lord, Scarce in the meanest State is it the custom

To ask the presence of a noble guest With much insistence, and when he accepts

The summons, and has come, to set on him With insolent dogs like these.

Lama. Nay, Prince, I pray you, What is it that has been?

Asan. Our chamberlain Was lately, in your absence, which your highness

So glibly doth excuse, set on and beaten By these dogs here.

Lama. Nay, sir, they are not dogs, But citizens of honour; yet indeed Wanting, I fear, in that deep courtesy Which from a stranger and a guest refuses

To take provoked offence. My lord, indeed

I am ashamed that citizens of Cherson Should act so mean a part. Come,

Prince, I pray you Forget this matter, and be sure your coming

Fills me with joy. Go, tell the Lady
Gycia
The Prince is safe in Cherson.

Enter GYCIA, IRENE, MELISSA, and Ladies. IRENE, seeing ASANDER, faints, and is withdrawn, GYCIA supporting her. Confusion.

Meg. My Lord Asander, remember what is due to yourself and Bosphorus. Remember, when this merchant's daughter comes, you must not treat her as an equal. Courtesy to a woman is all very well, but rank has greater claims still, especially when you have to deal with such people as these. Now, remember, you must make no obeisance at all; and if you advance to meet her more than one step, you are lost for ever. These are the truly important things.

Asan. Good Megacles, forewarned I am forearmed.

(Aside) Thou fluent trickster! Fit head of such a State! I would to Heaven I had never come!

Re-enter GYCIA.

Nay, nay, I thank the saints That I have come. Who is this peerless creature?

Is this the old man's daughter? — *Lama.* Prince Asander, This is my daughter, Gycia. Of the prince Thou hast heard many a time, my daughter.

Gycia (confused). Ay!— Indeed I— *Lama.* Come, my girl, thou art not used To fail of words.

Asan. Nay, sir, I pray you press her not to speak.

And yet I fain would hear her. Artemis Showed not so fair, nor with a softer charm

Came Hebe's voice.

Gycia. Nay, sir, I did not know A soldier could thus use a courtier's tongue.

Asan. If being bred in courts would give me power To put my thought in words, then would I fain Be courtier for thy sake.

Gycia. Ah, sir, you jest. The ways of courts we know not, but I bid thee Good welcome to our city, and I prithee Command whatever service our poor

Cherson Can give whilst thou art here. (To MEGACLES) Pray you my lord, Accompany his Highness and our household

To the poor chambers which our homely state Allots for him. They are but poor, I know,

For one who lives the stately life of kings; But such as our scant means can reach they are.

Meg. My lady, I have lived long time in courts, But never, in the palaces of Rome, Have I seen beauty such as yours, or grace

More worthy of a crown. (To MELISSA) To you, my lady, I bow with most respectful homage.

Surely The goddess Heré has not left the earth

While you are here. I humbly take
my leave
For the present of your Highness with
a thousand
Obeisances, and to your gracious father
Humbly I bend the knee. My Lord
Asunder,
I do attend your Highness.

Mel. What a man!
What noble manners! What a polished
sir!
How poor to such a courtier our rude
Court
And humble manners show!

Asan. Good Megacles,
Get me to my chamber—quick, ere I
o'erpass

All reasonable limits. I am sped;
I am myself no more.

Lama. Farewell awhile.
We will welcome you at supper.

[*Exeunt all but LAMACHUS and GYCIA.*

Lama. Well, my daughter,
What think you of this hot-brained
youth? I faith,
I like his soldier's bluntness, and he
seemed
To be a little startled, as I thought,
By something which he saw when thou
didst come.

Perchance it was the charm of one who
came

Among thy ladies took him.

Gycia. Nay, my father,
I think not so indeed.

Lama. Ah! well, I am old,
And age forgets. But this I tell thee,
•daughter:
If in my youth I had seen a young
man's gaze
Grow troubled, and he should start,
and his cheek pale,

A young girl drawing near, I had
almost thought
Him suddenly in love.

Gycia. Oh, nay indeed!
Who should be favoured thus? There
is no woman
In our poor Cherson worthy that his
gaze

Might rest on her a moment.

Lama. Ah, my girl,
Is it thus with thee? They say that
love is blind,
And thou art blind, therefore it may
be, Gycia,
That thou too art in love. Tell me
how it is.

Couldst thou love this man, if he loved
thee?

*Gycia (throwing herself on her father's
neck).* Father!

Lama. Say no more, girl. I am not
so old as yet

That I have quite forgotten my own
youth,

When I was young and loved; and if
I err not,

I read love's fluttering signals on thy
cheek,

And in his tell-tale eyes. But listen!

Music!
We must prepare for supper with our
guests.

SCENE III.—A STREET IN CHERSON.

MEGACLES; afterwards MELISSA.

Megacles. Well, it is time for the
banquet. Somehow, this place im-
proves on acquaintance, after all. Poor,
of course, and rude to a degree. But
truly the Lady Gycia is fair—as fair,

indeed, as if she was the Emperor's daughter. She is a beautiful creature, truly. But give me that delightful lady-in-waiting of hers, the Lady Melissa. What grace! what rounded proportions! I like mature beauty. She is as like the late divine Empress as two pens, and I thought—I dare say I was wrong, but I really thought—I made an impression. Poor things! poor things! They can't help themselves. We courtiers really ought to be very careful not to abuse our power. It is positive cruelty. The contest is too unequal. It makes one inclined sometimes to put on the manners of a clown, so as to give them a chance. Nay, nay, you might as well ask the Ethiopian to change his skin as a courtier his fine manners. By all the saints! here she comes in *propria persona*.

Enter the LADY MELISSA.

Mel. Heavens! it is the strange nobleman. I am sure I am all of a flutter.

Meg. (*advancing with formal bows*). My lady, I am enchanted (*bows again; then takes several steps to the right, then to the left, and bows*). What a wonderful good fortune! Ever since I had the honour to see you just now, I have only lived in the hope of seeing you again.

Mel. (*curtsying*). Oh, my lord, you great courtiers can find little to interest you in our poor little Court and its humble surroundings.

Meg. Madam, I beg! not a word! I was just thinking that you exactly resembled the late divine Empress.

Mel. Oh, my lord, forbear! The Empress! and I have never been out

of Cherson! You flatter me, you flatter me, indeed. That is the way with all you courtiers from Constantinople. Now, if you had said that my Lady Gycia was beautiful—

Meg. My dear lady, I do not admire her in the least. She has no manners, really—nothing, at any rate, to attract a man of the great world; a mere undeveloped girl, with all the passion to come. No, no, my good lady, give me a woman who has lived. We courtiers know manners and breeding when we see them, and yours are simply perfect, not to say Imperial.

Mel. What a magnificent nature! Well, to say the truth, the Lady Gycia is not at all to my taste. It is a cold, insipid style of beauty, at the best; and she is as self-willed and as straitlaced as a lady abbess. I suppose she is well matched with the Prince Asander?

Meg. Well, he is a handsome lad enough, and virtuous, but weak, as youth always is, and pliable. Now, for myself, I am happy to say I am steadfast and firm as a rock.

Mel. Ah, my lord, if all women saw with my eyes, there would not be such a run after youth. Give me a mature man, who has seen the world and knows something of life and manners.

Meg. What an intelligent creature! Madam, your sentiments do you credit. I beg leave to lay at your feet the assurance of my entire devotion.

Mel. Oh, my lord, you are too good! Why, what a dear, condescending creature!—the manners of a Grand Chamberlain and the features of an Apollo!

Meg. Permit me to enrol myself among the ranks of your humble slaves and admirers (*kneels and kisses her*

[hand]. But hark ! the music, and I
must marshal the guests to the banquet.
Permit me to marshal you.

[Enter with measured steps.]

SCENE IV.—THE GARDEN WITHOUT
THE BANQUETING-ROOM. MOON-
LIGHT. THE SEA IN THE DISTANCE,
WITH THE HARBOUR.

ASANDER and GYCIA descend the steps
of the palace slowly together. Music
heard from within the hall.

Asan. Come, Gycia, let us take the
soft sweet air
Beneath the star of love. The festive
lights
Still burn within the hall, where late
we twain
Troth-plighted sate, and I frown'd out
thine eyes
Drank long, deep draughts of love
stronger than wine.
And still the minstrels sound their
dulcet strains,
Which then I heard not, since my ears
were filled
With the sweet music of thy voice.
My sweet,
How blest it is, left thus alone with
love,
To hear the love-lorn nightingales com-
plain
Beneath the star-gemmed heavens, and
drink cool airs
Fresh from the summer sea ! There
sleeps the main
Which once I crossed unwilling. Was
it years since,
In some old vanished life, or yesterday?
When saw I last my father and the
shores

Of Bosphorus ? Was it days since, or
years,

Tell me, thou fair enchantress, who hast
wove

So strong a spell around me ?

Gycia. Nay, my lord ;

Tell thou me first what magic 'tis hath
turned

A woman who had scoffed so long 'at
love

Until to day —to-day, whose blessed
night

Is hung so thick with stars—to feel as I,
That I have found the twin life which
the gods

Retained when mine was fashioned,
and must turn

To what so late was strange, as the
flower turns

To the sun ; ay, though he withers her,
or clouds

Come 'twixt her and her light, turns
still to him,

And only gazing lives.

Asan. Thou perfect woman !
And art thou, then, all mine ? What

have I done,

What have I been, that thus the favour-
ing gods

And the consentient strength of hostile
States

Conspire to make me happy ? Ah ! I
fear,

Lest too great happiness be but a snare
Set for our feet by Fate, to take us
fast

And then despoil our lives.

Gycia. My love, fear not.
We have found each other, and no power
has strength

To put our lives asunder.

Asan. Thu I seal
Our contract with a kiss. [Kisses her.

Gycia. Oh, happiness !
To love and to be loved ! And yet
methinks
Love is not always thus. To some he
brings
Deep disappointment only, and the
pain

(Of melancholy years. I have a lady
Who loves, but is unloved. Poor soul !
she lives

A weary life. Some youth of Bosphorus
Stole her poor heart.

Asan. Of Bosphorus saidst thou ?
And her name is ?

Gycia. Irene. Didst thou know
her ?

Asan. Nay, love, or if I did I have
forgot her.

Gycia. Poor soul ! to-day when first
we met, she saw
Her lover 'midst thy train and swooned
away.

Asan. Poor heart ! This shall be
seen to. Tell me, Gycia,
Didst love me at first sight ?

Gycia. Unreasonable,
To bid me tell what well thou knowest
already.

Thou know'st I did. And when did
love take thee ?

Asan. I was wrapt up in spleen and
haughty pride,
When, looking up, a great contentment
took me,

Shed from thy gracious eyes. Nought
else I saw,
Than thy dear self.

Gycia. And hadst thou ever loved ?

Asan. Never, dear Gycia.
I have been so rapt in warlike enter-

prises
Or in the nimble chase, all my youth
long,

That never had I looked upon a
woman
With thought of love before, though it
may be
That some had thought of me, being a
Prince
And heir of Bosphorus.

Gycia. Not for thyself ;
That could not be. Deceiver !

Asan. Nay, indeed !

Gycia. Oh, thou dear youth !

Asan. I weary for the day
When we our mutual love shall crown
with marriage.

Gycia. Not yet, my love, we are so
happy now.

Asan. But happier then, dear
Gycia.

Gycia. Nay, I know not
If I could bear it and live. But hark,
my love !

The music ceases, and the sated guests
Will soon be sped. Thou must resume
thy place

Of honour for a little. I must go,
If my reluctant feet will bear me
hence,

To dream of thee the livelong night.
Farewell,

Farewell till morning. All the saints
of heaven

Have thee in keeping !

Asan. Go not yet, my sweet ;
And yet I bid thee go. Upon thy lips
I set love's seal, thus, thus.

[Kisses her. They embrace.

Good night !

Gycia. Good night !
[Exit GYCIA.

Enter IRENE unperceived.

Asan. Ah, sweetest, best of women !
paragon

Of all thy sex, since first thy ancestress
Helen, the curse of cities and of men,
Marshalled the hosts of Greece ! But
she brought discord ;
Thou, by thy all-compelling sweetness,
peace
And harmony for strife. What have
I done,
I a rough soldier, like a thousand others
Upon our widespread plains, to have
won this flower
Of womanhood—this jewel for the
front
Of knightly pride to wear, and, wear-
ing it,
Let all things else go by : To think
that I,
Fool that I was, only a few hours since,
Bemoaned the lot which brought me
here and bade me
Leave my own land, which now sinks
fathoms deep
Beyond my memory's depths, and scarce
would deign
To obey thee, best of fathers, when thy
wisdom *
Designed to make ~~we~~^{me} blest ! Was ever
woman
So gracious and so comely ? And I
scorned her
For her Greek blood and love of
liberty !
Fool ! purblind fool ! there is no other
like her ;
I glory being her slave.
Irene. I pray you, pardon me, my
Lord Asander.
I seek the Lady Gycia ; is she here ?
Asan. No, madam ; she has gone,
and with her taken
The glory of the night. But thou dost
love her—
Is it not so, fair lady ?

Ire. Ay, my lord,
For we have lived together all our
lives ;
I could not choose but love.
Asan. Well said indeed.
Tell me, and have I seen thy face
before ?
A something in it haunts me. —
Ire. Ay, my lord.
Am I forgot so soon ?
Asan. Indeed ! Thy name ?
Where have I seen thee ?
Ire. Where ? Dost thou, then, ask ?
Asan. Ay ; in good truth, my
treacherous memory
Betrays me here.
Ire. Thou mayest well forget
My name, if thou hast quite forgot its
owner. [Weeps.
I am called Irene.
Asan. Strange ! the very name
My lady did relate to me as hers
Who bears a hopeless love. Weep
not, good lady ;
Take comfort. Heaven is kind.
Ire. Nay, my good lord,
What comfort ? He I love loves not
again,
Or not me, but another.
Asan. Ah, poor lady !
I pity you indeed, now I have known
True recompence of love.
Ire. Dost thou say pity ?
And pity as they tell's akin to love.
What comfort is for me, my Lord
Asander,
Who love one so exalted in estate
That all return of honourable love
Were hopeless, as if I should dare to
raise
My eyes to Cesar's self ? What
comfort have I,
If lately I have heard this man I love

Communing with his soul, when none seemed near,
Betray a heart flung prostrate at the feet
Of another, not myself; and well I know
Not Lethe's waters can wash out remembrance
Of that o'ermastering passion—naught but death
Or hopeless depths of crime?

Asan. Lady, I pity Thy case, and pray thy love may meet return.

Ire. Then wilt thou be the suppliant to thyself, And willing love's requital, Oh, requite it ! Thou art my love, Asander—thou, none other. There is naught I would not face, if I might win thee. That I a woman should lay bare my soul :

Disclose the virgin secrets of my heart To one who loves me not, and doth despise

The service I would tender !

Asan. Cease, & pray you ; These are distempered words.

Ire. Nay, they are true, And come from the inner heart. Leave these strange shors
And her you love. I know her from a child. She is too high and cold for mortal love :

Too wrapt in duty, and high thoughts of State,

Artemis and Athene fused in one, Ever to throw her life and maiden shame

As I do at thy feet.

[Kneels.]

Asan. Rise, lady, rise ; I am not worthy such devotion.

Ire. Take me Over seas ; I care not where. I'll be thy slave, Thy sea-boy ; follow thee, ill-housed, disguised, Through hard-ship and through peril, so I see

Thy face sometimes, and hear sometimes thy voice, For I am sick with love.

Asan. Lady, I prithee Forget these wild words. I were less than man

Should I remember them, or take the gift

Which tis not reason offers. I knew not

Thy passion nor its object, nor am free To take it, for the vision of my soul Has looked upon its sun, and turns no more

To any lower light.

Ire. My Lord Asander, She is not for thee ; she cannot make thee happy,

Nor thou her. Oh, believe me ! I am full *

Of boding thoughts of the sure fatal day

Which shall dissolve in blood the bonds which love

To-day has plighted. If thou wilt not take me,

Then get thee gone alone. I see a fire

Which burns more fierce than love, and it consumes thee.

Fly with me, or alone, but fly.

Asan. Irene, Passion distracts thy brain. I may you, seek

Some mutual love as I. My heart is
fixed,
And gone beyond recall. [Exit.]

Enter THEODORUS unseen.

Ire. (weeping passionately). Dis-
graced ! betrayed !
Rejected ! All the madness of my
love
Flung back upon me, as one spurns a
gift
Who scorns the giver. That I love
him still,
And cannot hate her who has robbed
me of him !
I shall go mad with shame !

Theo. Great Heaven ! sister,
What words are these I hear ? My
father's daughter
Confessing to her shame ! [IRENE weeps
Come, tell me, woman ;
I am thy brother and protector, tell
me
What mean these words ?

Ire. Nay, nay, I cannot, brother.
They mean not what they seem, indeed
they do not.

Theo. They mean not what they
seem. Thou hast been long
In Bosphorus, and oftentimes at the Court
Hast seen the Prince. When he to-day
comes hither,
Thou swoonest at the sight. I, seek-
ing thee,
Find thee at night alone, he having left
thee,
Lamenting for thy shame. Wouldst
have me credit
Thy innocence ? Speak, if thou hast a
word
To balance proofs like these, or let thy
silence
Condemn thee.

Ire. (after a pause, and slowly, as if
calculating consequences). Then
do I keep silence, brother,
And let thy vengeance fall.

Theo. Oh, long-dead mother,
Who now art with the prints, shut fast
thy ears .

Against thy daughter's shame ! These
are the things
That make it pain to live : all precious
gifts,
Honour, observance, virtue, flung away
For one o'ermastering passion. Why
are we

Above the brute so far, if we keep still
The weakness of the brute ? Go from
my sight,
Thou vile, degraded wretch. For him
whose craft
And wickedness has wronged thee,
this I swear --
I will kill him, if I can, or he shall
me,

I will call on him to draw, and make
my sword
Red with a villain's blood.

Ire. (eagerly). Nay, nay, my
brother,
That would proclaim my shame ; and
shouldst thou slay him,
Thou wouldst break thy lady's heart.

Theo. Doth she so love him ?
Ire. Ay, passionately, brother.

Theo. Oh, just Heaven !
And oh, confused world !
How are we fettered here ! I may not
kill

A Villain who has done my sister
wrong,
Since she I love has given her heart to
him,
And hangs upon his life. I would not
pain

My Gycia with the smallest, feeblest pang
That wrings a childish heart, for all the world,
How, then, to kill her love, though killing him
Would rid the world of a villain, and would leave
lady free to love? There's not love's part
To pain her thus, nor for the wealth and power
Of all the world heaped up. I tell thee, sister,
Thy paramour is safe—I will not seek
To do him hurt; but thou shalt go to-night
To my Bithynian castle. Happily thence, After long penances, and ~~and~~ close days,
Thou mayst return, and I may bear once more
To see my sister's face.

Ire. Farewell, my brother! I do obey; I bide occasion, waiting
For what the years may bring.

Theo. Repent thy sin.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—CHERSON, ~~two~~ YEARS AFTER. THE PALACE OF LAMANUS.

ASANDER and GYCIA.

Gycia. What day is this, Asander? Canst thou tell me?

Asan. Not I, my love. All days are now alike; The weeks fleet by, the days equivalent gems

Strung on a golden thread.

Gycia. Thou careless darling! I did not ask thee of the calendar,

Dost think a merchant's daughter knows not that?

Nay, nay; I only asked thee if thou knewest

If aught upon this day had ever brought Some great change to thee.

Asan. Sweetest, dearest wife, Our marriage! Thinkest thou I should forget,

Ay, though the chills of age had froze my brain.

That day of all my life?

Gycia. Dost thou regret it? I think thou dost not, but 'tis sweet to hear,

The avowal from thy lips?

Asan. Nay, never a moment. And thou?

Gycia. Nay, never for a passing thought. I did not know what life was till I knew thee.

Dost thou remember it, how I came forth,

Looking curiously to see the stranger, And lo! I spied my love, and could not murmur

A word of courtesy?

Asan. Dost thou remember How I, a ~~greedy~~ and hot-brained youth,

Ful of rash pride and princely arrogance,

Lifted my eyes, and saw a goddess coming—

Gycia. Nay, a weak woman only.

Asan. And was tamed By the first glance?

Gycia. What are we lovers still, After two years of marriage?

Asan. Is it two years, Or twenty? By my faith, I know not which,

For happy lives glide on like seaward streams
 Which keep their peaceful and un-ruffled course
 So smoothly that the voyager hardly notes
 The progress of the tide. Ay, two years 'tis,
 And now it seems a day, now twenty years,
 But always, always happy.

[Embraces GYCIA.]

Gycia. Yet, my love,
 We have known trials too. My honoured sire
 Has gone and left us since.

Asan. Ay, he had reaped
 The harvest of his days, and fell asleep
 Amid the garnered sheaves.

Gycia. Dearest, I know
 He loved thee as a son, and always strove
 To fit thee for the place within our State

Which one day should be thine. Sometimes I think,
 Since he has gone, I have been covetous
 Of thy dear love, and kept thee from the labour
 Of Statecraft, and the daily manly toil
 Which do beset thyself; and I have thought;
 Viewing thee with the jealous eye of love,

That I have masked some shade of melancholy
 Creep on when none else saw thee, and desired
 If only I might share it.

Asan. Nay, my love,
 I have been happy truly, though sometimes,

It may be, I have missed the clear, brisk air
 Of the free plains; the trumpet-notes of war,
 When far against the sky the glost
 Lit by the rising sun revealed the ranks
 Of the opposing host, the thundering onset
 Of fierce conflicting squadrons, and the advance
 Of the victorious hosts. Oh for the vigour
 And freshness of such life! But I have chosen
 To sleep in beds of down, as Caesar might,
 And live a woman's minion.

Gycia. Good my husband,
 Thou shouldst not speak thus. I would have the win
 Thy place in the Senate, rule our Cherson's fortunes,
 Be what my father was without the name,

And gain that too in time.
Asan. What! You would have me Cezar, intrigue, and cheat, and play the huckster,
 As your republicans peace on their lips,
 And subtle scheming traities, till the moment

When it is safe to spring? Would you have me cringe To the ignorant mob of churls, through whose sweet voices
 The road to greatness lies? Nay, nay; I am A King's man of Bosphorus, not Cherson—
 A Scythian more than Greek.

Gycia. Nay, my good lord,
Scythian or Greek, to me thou art more
dear
Than all the world beside. Yet will
not duty,
The memory of the dead, the love of
country,
The pride of the great race from which
we spring,
Suffer my silence wholly, hearing thee.
It is not true that men Athenian-born
Are of less courage, less of noble nature,
More crafty in design, less frank of
purpose,
Than are thy countrymen. They have
met and fought them,
Thou knowest with what fate. For
polity
I hold it better that self-governed men
Should, using freedom, but eschewing
license,
Fare to what chequered fate the will of
Heaven
Reserves for them, than shackled by
the chains
The wisest tyrant, gilding servitude
With seeming gains, imposes. We are
free
In speech, in council, in debate, in act,
As when our great Demosthenes berated
back
Defiance to the tyrant. Nay, my lord,
Forgive my open speech. I have not
forgot
That we are one in heart and mind and
soul,
Knit in sweet bonds for ever. Put
from thee
This jaundiced humour.
If State-craft please not, by the head-
long chase
Which once I know thou lovedst. Do
not grudge

To leave me; for to-day my bosom
friend,
After two years of absence, comes to me.
I shall not feel alone, having Irene.
Asan. Whom dost thou say?
Irene?
Gycia. Yes, the same.
She was crossed in love, poor girl, dost
thou remember,
When we were wed?
Asan. Gycia, I mind it well.
Send her away—she is no companion
for thee;
She is not fit, I say.
Gycia. What is't thou sayest?
Thou canst know nought of her. Nay,
I remember,
When I did ask thee if thou knewest her
At Bosphorus, thou answerest that
thou didst not.
Asan. I know her. She is no fit
mate for thee.
Gycia. Then, thou didst know her
when thy tongue denied it.
Asan. How 'tis I know her boots
not: I forbid
My wife to know that woman. Send
her hence.
Gycia. Nay, nay, my lord, it profits
not to quarrel.
Thou art not thyself. Either thou
knew'st her name
When we were wedded, or unreasoning
spleen.
Doth blind thy judgment since. Thou
canst not know her
Who has been absent.
Asan. Ask no more, good wife:
I give no reason.
Gycia. Nay, indeed, good husband,
Thou hast no reason, and without good
reason
I will not spurn my friend.

Asau. Gycia, forgive me ;
I spoke but for our good, and I will
tell thee
One day what stirs within me, but to-
day
Let us not mar our happy memories
By any shade of discord.

Gycia. Oh, my love,
Forgive me if I have seemed, but for a
moment,
To fail in duty. I am all, all thine ;
I have bought but thee to live for.
Childish hands
And baby voices lisping for their mother
Are not for me, nor thee ; but, all in
all,
We joy together, we sorrow together,
and last
Shall die, when the hour comes, as
something tells me,
Both in the selfsame hour.

Asau. Nay, wife, we are young ;
Our time is not yet come. Let us
speak now
Of what I know thou holdest near thy
heart.
I do remember that it was thy wish
To celebrate thy father's name and
fame
By some high festal. If thy purpose
hold
For such observance, the sad day which
took him
Returns a short time hence ; I will
employ
Whatever wealth is mine to do him
honour,
And thee, my Gycia. Honouring the
sire,
I honour too the child.

Gycia. My love, I thank thee
For this spontaneous kindness, and I
love thee ;

I am all thine own again. Come, let
us go ;
Nor spare the wealth wherewith his
bounty blest us
To do fit honour to the illustrious dead.
[Exit.

SCENE II.—THE SAME.

MIGAELLES, Courtiers ; afterwards
ASANDER.

Mig. Well, my lords, two years
have passed since we left our Bosphorus,
and I see no sign of our returning
there. If it were not for that delightful
Lady Melissa, whose humble slave
I am always (Courtiers laugh), I would
give all I am worth to turn my back
upon this scurvy city and its republican
crew. But my Lord Asander is so
devoted to his fair lady—and, indeed, I
can hardly wonder at it—that there
seems no hope of our seeing the old
shores again. I thought he would have
been off long ago.

1st Court. A model husband the
Prince, a paragon of virtue.

2nd Court. Well, there is no great
merit in being faithful to a rich and
beautiful woman. I think I could be
as steady as a rock under the like conditions.

3rd Court. Well, mind ye, it is not
every man who could treat the very
marked overtures of the fair Lady
Frene as he did. And he had not seen
his wife often, either. No ; the man is
a curious mixture, somewhat cold, and
altogether constant, and that is not a
bad combination to keep a man straight
with the sex. Poor soul ! do you re-
member how she pursued him at Bos-

phorus, and how she fainted away at the wedding? They say she is coming back speedily, in her right mind. She has been away ever since, no one knows where. That solemn brother of hers conveyed her away privily.

1st Court. I hate that fellow--a canting hypocrite, a solemn impostor!

2nd Court. So say we all. But mark you, if the Lady Irene comes back, there will be mischief before long. What news from Bosphorus, my Lord Megacles?

Meg. I have heard a rumour, my lord, that his Majesty the King is ailing.

1st Court. Nay, is he? Then there may be a new King and a new Queen, and we shall leave this dog-hole and live at home like gentlemen once more.

3rd Court. Then would his sacred Majesty's removal be a blessing in disguise.

2nd Court. Ay, indeed would it. Does the Prince know of it?

Meg. I have not told him aught, having, indeed, nothing certain to tell; but he soon will, if it be true. But here his Highness comes.

Enter ASANDER.

My Lord Asander, your Highness's humble servant welcomes you with effusion. [Bows low.]

Asan. Well, my good Megacles, and you, my lords. There will be ample work for you all ere long. The Lady Gycin is projecting a great festival in memory of her father, and all that the wealth of Cherson can do to honour him will be done. There will be solemn processions, a banquet, and a people's holiday. Dost thou not spy some good ceremonial work there, my

good Megacles? Why, thou wilt be as happy as if thou wert at Byzantium itself, marshalling the processions, arranging the banquet, ushering in the guests in due precedence, the shipowner before the merchant, the merchant before the retailer. Why, what couldst thou want more, old Trusty? [Laughs.]

Meg. Ah, my Lord Prince, your Highness is young. When you are as old as I am, you will not scoff at Ceremony. This is the pleasantest day that I have spent since your Highness's wedding-day. I thank you greatly, and will do my best, your Highness.

Asan. That I am sure of, good Megacles. Good day, my lords, good day. [Exit MEGACLES and Courtiers.]

Enter Messenger.

Mess. My Lord Asander, a messenger from Bosphorus has just landed, bringing this letter for your Highness.

Asan. Let me see it. (Reads) "Lysimachus to Asander sends greeting. Thy father is failing fast, and is always asking for his son. Thou art free, and must come to him before he dies. I have much to say to thee, having heard long since of a festival in memory of Lamachus to be held shortly. I will be with thee before then. Be ready to carry out the plan which I have formed for thy good, and will reveal to thee. Remember."

My father ailing?
And asks for me, and I his only son
Chained here inactive, while the old
man pines
In that great solitude which hems a
throne,
With none but hirelings round him.
Dearest father,

I fear that sometimes in the happy years
Which have come since, my wandering
 regards,
Fixed on one overmastering thought,
 have failed
To keep their wonted duty. If indeed
This thing has been, I joy the time has
 come
When I may show my love. But I
 forget !
The letters honour binds are adamant ;
I am free no more. Nay, nay, there is
 no bond
Can bind a son who hears his father's
 voice
Call from a bed of pain. I must go
 and will,
Though all the world cry shame on my
 dishonour ;
And with me I will take my love, my
 bride,
To glad the old man's eyes. My mind
 is fixed ;
I cannot stay, I cannot rest, away
From Bosphorus. (*Summons* Messenger)
 Go, call the Lady Gycia.
(Resumes) Ay, and my oath, I had for-
 gotten it.
I cannot bear to think what pitiless plot
Lysimachus has woven for the feast.
What it may be I know not, but I fear
Some dark and dreadful deed. 'Twere
 well enough
For one who never knew the friendly
 grasp
Of hands that once were foemen's.
 But for me,
Who have lived among them, come and
 gone with them,
Trodden with them the daily paths of
 life,
Mixed in their pleasures, shared their
 hopes and fears

For two long happy years, to turn and
 doom
Their city to ruin, and their wives and
 children
To the insolence of rapine? Nay, I
 dare not.
I will sail at once, and get me gone for
 ever.
I will not tell my love that I am bound
By her father's jealous fancies to return
To Bosphorus no more. To break my
 oath!
That were to break if only in the word,
But keep it in the spirit. Surely Heaven
For such an innocent perjury keeps me
 pains.
But here she comes.

Enter GYCIA.

Gycia. Didst send for me, my
 lord?
Asan. Gycia, the King is ill, and
 asks for me ;
He is alone and weak.
Gycia. Then, fly to him
At once, and I will follow thee. But
 stay !
Is he in danger?
Asan. Nay, not presently ;
Only the increasing weight of years
 o'ersets
His feeble sum of force.
Gycia. * Keeps he his bed ?
Asan. Not yet as I have known.
Gycia. Well then, dear heart,
We yet may be in time if we should
 tarry
To celebrate the honours we have vowed
To my dead father. This day sennight
 brings
The day which saw him die.
Asan. Nay, nay, my sweet ;
'Twere best we went at once.

Gycia. My lord, I honour
The love thou bearest him, but go I
cannot,
Until the feast is done. 'Twould cast
discredit
On every daughter's love for her dead
sire,
If I should leave this solemn festival
With all to do, and let the envious
crowd
Carp at the scant penurious courtesy
Of hireling honours by an absent
daughter
To her illustrious dead.

Asan. (earnestly). My love, 'twere
best
We both were far away.

Gycia. My lord is pleased
To speak in riddles, but till reason speaks
'Twere waste of time to listen.

Asan. Nay, my wife,
Such words become thee not, but to
obey
Is the best grace of woman. Were I
able,
I would tell thee all, I fear, for thee
and me,
But cannot.

Gycia. Then, love, thou canst go
alone,
And I must follow thee. The Archon
Zetho

Comes presently, to order what remains
To make the solemn festival do honour
To the blest memory of Lamachus.
Doubtless, he will devise some fitting
pretext
To excuse thy absence.

Asan. Nay, thou must not ask him;
Breathe not a word, I pray.

Gycia. My good Asander,
What is it moves thee thus? See, here
he comes.

Enter ZETHO and Senators.

Gycia. Good morrow, my Lord
Zetho! We were late,
Debating of the coming festival,
And how my lord the Prince, having
ill news
From Bosphorus, where the King his
sire lies sick,
Can bear no part in it.

Zetho. I grieve indeed
To hear this news, and trust that
Heaven may send
Swift comfort to his son, whom we ~~sigh~~
love.

Asan. I thank thee, Archon, for
thy courtesy;
And may thy wish come true.

Gycia. And meantime, since my
husband's heart is sore
For his sire's lonelihood, our pur-
pose is
That he should sail to-morrow and go
hence

To Bosphorus, where I, the festival
Being done, will join him later, and
devote

A daughter's loving care and tender
hand

To smooth the old man's sick-bed.

Zetho. Nay, my daughter,
I grieve this cannot be. The Prince
Asander,
Coming to Cherson only two years
gone,
Did pledge his solemn word to thy dead
father

That never would he seek, come foul
or fair,

To turn from Cherson homewards, and
I marvel
That never, in the years that since have
passed

Amid the close-knit bonds of wedded
lives,
He has revealed this secret. We who
rule
Our Cherson know through what blind
shoals of fortune
Our ship of state drives onward. And
I dare not,
Holding the rule which was thy father's
once,
Release him from the solemn pledge
which keeps
Our several States bound fast in amity,
~~But~~ each from the other separate, and
each
Free from the perils tangled intercourse
Might breed for both. Indeed, it can-
not be;
I grieve that so it is.

Gyia. My Lord Asander,
Are these things so indeed?

Asan. They are, my wife.
A rash and heedless promise binds me
fast,
Which, in all frankness, I had never
dreamt
Could thus demand fulfilment. Who
is there
More loyal to the State than I? Who
is there
Bound by such precious chains of love
and faith
As is thy husband? If I said no word
Of this before, it was that I would
fain
Forget this hateful compact. Sir, I
beg you
Let me go hence, and when the old
man's sickness
Is done, as Heaven will have it, take
my word
That I will be a citizen of Cherson
Again, whate'er may come.

Zetho. If the King dies,
Then art thou straightway King of
Bosphorus,
Knowing the strength and weakness of
our State,
And having bound to thee by closest
friendship
Our chiefest citizens. Nay, nay, I dare
not
Relieve thee from the pledge.

Asan. Thou hoary trickster,
Speakest thou thus to me? [Draws.
Gyia (interposing). Great heavens!
Asander,
Knowest thou what thou dost? (*To*
Zetho) Pardon him, sir.
He is not himself, I think, but half
distracted,
To bear himself thus madly.

Zetho. Daughter, the State
Knows to protect itself from insolence
And arrogant pride like this, and it is
certain
'Twas a wise caution led thy honoured
father
To stipulate that such ungoverned
passion
Should be cut off from those conspiring
forces
From which combined came danger.

Asan. *Gyia,*
Hearst thou this schemer? Dost thou
know indeed
That I am imprisoned here, while my
loved father
Lies on the bed of death? Dost thou
distrust me,
That thou dost speak no word?

Gyia. My lord, I cannot.
The measure which my father's wisdom
planned
For the safety of the State, I, a weak
woman,

Am too infirm to judge. Thou didst
not tell me,
Asking that I should fly with thee, the
bonds
By which thy feet were fettered. Had
I known
I never had consented. Had I gone,
Breaking the solemn ordinance of State,
I should have left with thee my former
love,
And sailed back broken-hearted. That
thou grievest
There is none knows as I, but oh, my
love!
Though it be hard to bear, yet is grief
lighter
Than broken vows, and blighted honour,
and laws
Made to sustain the State, yet overset
By one man's will. Dearest, we cannot
go—
Nor thou; the State forbids it. I will
pray
Thy father may grow strong again, and
sit
Here at our hearth a guest; but this is
certain—
To Bosphorus we go not. And I pray
you
Make to my lord, who fills my father's
place,
What reparation thy ungoverned rage
And hasty tongue demand.
Asan. Thou cold Greek woman!
Of this, then, 'twas they warned me
a smooth tongue
And a cold heart; a brain by logic
ruled,
And not at all by love. Thou hast no
pity.
For pity shapes not into syllogisms;
Nor can affection ape philosophy,
Nor natural love put on the formal robe
Of cold too-balanced State-craft. Hear
me, old man,
And thou too, wife. 'Twere better,
ay, far better,
That I should get me gone, and my
wife with me,
Than be pent here unwilling; but
were it better
Or were it worse, be sure I will not
stay
When duty calls me hence. Wife, wilt
thou come?
Gycia. My lord, I cannot.
Isau. Then, I go alone.
Zetho. Nay, thou shalt not. Ho
there! arrest the Prince.
[Guards arrest ASANDER.
Isau. Unhand me. At your peril.
[Draper.
Gycia. Oh, my husband! [Weeps.

SCENE III.—A ROOM IN THE PALACE.

IRENE; afterwards GYCIA.

Ire. What! am I mad, or does
some devilish powerPossess me heart and soul? I once
loved Gycia;I love Asander with o'ermastering love,
And yet these frequent rumours of dis-
sensionsMarring the smooth course of their
wedded lifeBring me a swift, fierce joy. If aught
befellTo separate those lovers, then might
FateAnd Chance open for me the golden
doorsThat lead to Love's own shrine; and
yet I know not

If any power might melt to mutual love

That too-cold heart. But still, no other chance
Is left but this alone : if I should force
Those loving souls apart, then 'twere
my turn.
Am I a monster, then, to will this wrong?
Nay, but a lovesick woman only,
Willing
To dare all for her passion. Though I loathe
Those crooked ways, yet loves despite
Myself,
Drives me relentless onward.

Enter Gycia.

Dearest lady,
Why art thou thus cast down? Some
lovers' quartel,
To be interred with kisses?

Gycia. Nay, Irene,
This is no lovers' quartel.

Ire. Tell me, Gycia,
What was the cause?

Gycia. The King of Bosphorus
Is ailing, and desires to see his son,
Who fain would go to him.

Ire. And thou refusedst
To let thy lover go?

[Laughs mockingly.]
Gycia. Nay, 'twas not so ;
But politic reasons of the State forbade
The Prince's absence.

Ire. Well, whate'er the cause,
The old man fain would see his son,
and thou

Deniedst.

Gycia. I denied him what the State
Denied him, and no more.

Ire. The State denied him !
What does it profit thee to be the
daughter
Of Lamachus, if thou art fettered thus

In each wish of thy heart ? If it were I,
And he my love, I would break all
bonds that came
Between me and my love's desire.

Gycia. Irene,
Thou know'st not what thou say'st.

Ire. It may be so ;
I do not love by halves.

Gycia. I do not need
That thou shouldest tutor me, who am
so blest.

In love's requital. I have nought to
learn

From thee, who bearest unrequited love
For one thou wilt not name.

Ire. Wouldst thou that I
Should name him ? Nay, it were best
not, believe me,
For me and thee.

Gycia. Why, what were it to me,
Thou luckless woman ?

Ire. What were it to thee ?
More than thou knowest, much.

Gycia. And therefore 'tis
That thou dost dare to tutor me to
deal

With the man I love, my husband.

Ire. Gycia,
Love is a tyrannous power, and brooks
no rival

Beside his throne. Dost thou, then,
love indeed,

Who art so filled with duty ?

Gycia. Do I love ?
Ay, from the depths of my enamoured
heart !

I am all his own to make or break at
will.

Only my duty to the State my mother
And the thrice-blessed memory of my
sire

Forbids that I should sink my soul in
his,

Or, loving, grow unworthy. But,
indeed,
Thou pleadest his cause as if thyself
did love him.

Ire. As if I loved!—as if!

Gycia. Indeed, 'tis well
Thou didst not, were he free, for he, it
seems,
Has known of thee, and speaks not
kindly words.
I know not wherefore.

Ire. Did he speak of me?

Gycia. Ay, that he did.

Ire. And what said he?

Gycia. I think
'Twere best thou didst not know.

Ire. Tell me, I prithee;
I can bear to hear.

Gycia. 'Twas but a hasty word,
And best forgotten.

Ire. But I prithee tell me,
What said he?

Gycia. That 'twere best I were
alone
Than commereing with thee, since thou
wert not
My fit companion.

Ire. Said he that, the coward?

Gycia. I am his wife, Irene.

Ire. What care I?
I have loved this man too well, before
he saw thee.

There, thou hast now my secret—I
have loved him,

And he loved me, and left me, and
betrayed me.

Was it for him to brand me with this
stain?

Until for thy companion! If I
be,

Whose fault is that but his, who found
me pure

And left me what I am?

Gycia. What! dost thou dare
Malign my husband thus? I have
known his life
From his own lips, and heard no word
of thee.

Ire. He did confess he knew me.

Gycia. Ay, indeed,
Not that he did the wrong.

Ire. My Lady Gycia,
Did ever man confess he wronged a
woman?

If thou believe not me, who am indeed
Disgraced, and by his fault, thou once
dost love

My brother Theodorus—send for him.
He is without, and waits me. Ask of
him,

Who has long known my secret.

Gycia. I will ask him.
Thou wretched woman, since thou art
polluted,

Whate'er my love may be, go from my
sight,

And send thy brother. Then betake
thyself

To a close prison in the haunted Tower,
Till I shall free thee. Out of my sight,
I say,

Thou wanton! [Exit IRENE.

What have I done, how have I sinned,
that Heaven

Tortures me thus? How can I doubt
this creature

Speaks something of the truth? Did he
not say

At first he never knew that wanton's
name?

Did he not afterwards betray such
knowledge

Of her and of her life as showed the
lie

His former words concealed? And yet
how doubt

My dear, who by two years of wedded
love
Has knit my soul to his? I know how
lightly
The world holds manly virtue, but I
hold
The laws of honour are not made to bind
Half of the race alone, leaving men
licensed
To break them when they will; but
dread decrees
Binding on all our kind. But oh, my
love,
I will not doubt thee, till conviction
bring
Proofs that I dare not doubt!

Enter THEODORUS.

Theo. My Lady Gycia,
I come at thy command.

Gycia. Good Theodorus,
Thou lovedst me once, I think?

Theo. I loved thee *once!*
Oh, heaven!

Gycia. I am in great perplexity
And sorrow, and I call upon thy
friendship
To succour me, by frank and free
confession
Of all thou knowest.

Theo. I can refuse thee nothing,
Only I beg that thou wilt ask me
nought

That answered may give pain.

Gycia. Nay, it is best
That I know all. I could not bear to
live

In ignorance, and yet I fear to grieve
thee

By what I ask. Thy sister late has
left me—

Theo. Ask not of her, I pray; I
cannot answer.

Gycia. Nay, by thy love I ask it.
Answer me.

Theo. Have me excused, I pray.

Gycia. Then, I am answered.

My husband, she affirms, betrayed her
honour

In Bosphorus, and now denies the
crime.

Thou knowest it true.

Theo. Alas! I cannot doubt it.
I have known all for years.

Gycia. Ye saints of heaven!
Is there no shame or purity in men,
Nor room for trust in them? I am a
wife

Who thought she did possess her
husband wholly,

Virgin with virgin. I have thought I
knew

His inmost heart, and found it
innocent;

And yet while thus I held him, while I
lay

Upon his bosom, all these happy hours
The venom of a shameful secret lurked
Within his breast. Oh, monster of
deceit,

Thou never lovedst as I! That I
should give

The untouched treasure of my virgin
heart

For some foul embers of a burnt-out love,
And lavish on the waste a wanton left
My heart, my soul, my life! Oh, it is
cruel!

I will never see him more, nor hear
his voice,

But die unloved and friendless.

[Weeps.]

Theo. (kneeling at her feet). Dearest
Gycia,

Thou canst not want a brother, friend,
and lover

While I am living. Oh, my love, my dear,
Whom I have loved from childhood,
put away
This hateful marriage, free thee from
the bonds
Of this polluted wedlock, and make
happy
One who will love thee always !

Enter LYSIMACHUS unperceived.

Gycia. Rise, Theodore,
I have no love to give. I am a wife.
Such word, dishonour me.
Theo. Forgive me, Gycia.
I know how pure thy soul, and would
not have thee
Aught other than thou art.

Gycia. I do forgive thee.
'Twas love confused thy reason ; but
be brave.
Set a guard on thy acts, thy words, thy
thoughts.

'Tis an unhappy world !

[*TITRONORUS kisses her hand and exits.*
Lys. Most noble lady,
Forgive me if at an unfitting time,
Amid the soft devoirs of gallantry,
I thus intrude unwilling ; but I seek
The Prince Asander.

Gycia. I have nought to hide
My husband might not know.

Lys. Then, thou art, doubtless,
His wife, the Lady Gycia. Good my
lady,
With such a presence to become a
crown,
We would you were at Bosphorus.

Gycia. 'Tis clear
Thou art a stranger here, or thou
wouldst know
That never would I leave my native city
To win the crown of Rome.

Lys. Madam, 'tis pity.
Gycia. Sir, this is courtly talk. You
came to see

My husband ; I will order that they
send him

At once to you. [Exit GYCIA.]

Lys. That was indeed good fortune
brought me hither
When her lover knelt to her. I do not
wonder
That kneel he should, for she is
beautiful
As Helen's self. There comes some
difference
Between her and Asander, and 'twere
strange
If I might not so work on't as to widen
The breach good fortune sends me, and
to bind,
Through that which I have seen, the
boy het husband,
To execute my will

Enter ASANDER.

Asan. Lysimachus,
I am rejoiced to see thee.

Lys. Good my lord,
How goes the world with thee ? Thou
art in woe
Graver than thou wast once.

Asan. I am ill at ease !
I am ill at ease ! How does the King
my father ?

Lys. Alas ! sir, he is ailing, and I
fear

Will never mend.

Asan. Is he in present danger ?
Lys. Ay, that he is. A month or
less from this

May see the end.

Asan. Keeps he his bed as yet ?

Lys. Nay, not yet, when I left him ;
but his mind

Turns always to his absent son with
longing,
And sometimes, as it were 'twixt sleep
and waking,
I hear him say, "Asander, oh, my
son !
Shall I not see thee more ? "

Aman. Oh, my dear father !
And dost thou love me thus, who have
forgot thee
These two long years ? Beloved, lonely
life !
Beloved failing eyes ! Lysimachus,
I must go hence, and yet my honour
binds me.
O God, which shall I choose ? They
do forbid me
The ruler of this place and that good
woman
Who is my wife, but holds their curse
State
More than my love—to go.

Lys. My prince, I come
To find a way by which thou mayst go
free
From that which binds thee fast.
This festival
To the dead Lamasius will give the
occasion
To set thee free. If thou dost doubt to
break
Thy word, yet doth a stronger, straiter
chain
Bind thee—thy oath. Thou hast not
forgot thy oath
To Bosphorus ?

Asan. Nay, I forget it not.
But what is it thou wouldest of
me ?

Lys. Asander,
The night which ends the festival shall
see us
Masters of Cherson.

Aman. Nay, but 'twere dishonour
To set upon a friendly State from
ambush—
"Twere murder, and not battle.

Lys. Art thou false
To thy own land and to thy dying
father ?

Aman. That I am not ; but never
could I bear
To play the midnight thief, and
massacre
Without announcement of legitimate
war

Whom daily I have known. My wife
I love
With all the love of my soul. If she
seem cold
When any word is spoken which may
touch
The safety of the State, think you she
would love

The husband who destroyed it ? All
my heart
Is in her keeping.

Lys. It is well indeed
To have such faith. Doubtless the
Lady Gycia
Returns this pure affection.

Asan. I would doubt
The saint in heaven sooner than her
truth,
Which if I doubted, then the skies
might fall,

The bounds of right and wrong might
be removed,
The perjuror show truthful, and the
wanton
Chaste as the virgin, and the cold, pure
saint

More foolish than the prodigal who eats
The husks of sense—it were all one to
me ;
I could not trust in virtue.

Lys. Thou art changed
Since when thy ship set sail from
Bosphorus ;
Thou didst not always think with such
fond thought
As now thou dost. Say, didst thou
find thy bride
Heart-whole as thou didst wish ? Had
she no lover
Ere yet thou camest ?

Asan. Nay, nay ; I found my wife
Virgin in heart and soul.

Lys. My Lord Asander,
Art thou too credulous here ? What if
I saw her
On that same spot, not half an hour
ago,
In tears, and kneeling at her feet a
gallant
Noble and comely as a morn in June,
Who bade her break, with passionate
words of love,
Her hateful marriage vows, and make
him blest
Who must for ever love ?

Asan. Thou sawest my wife
Gycia, my pearl of women, my life, my
treasure ?
Nay, nay, 'tis some sick dream ! Thou
art mistaken.
Who knelt to her ?

Lys. She called him Theodorus.
Asan. Irene's brother ! Who was
it who said
He loved her without hope ? Lysi-
machus,
What is it that thou sawest ? Come,
'tis a jest !
Kneeling to Gycia, praying her to
fly !

Nay, nay, what folly is this ? [Laughs.
Lys. My lord, I swear
It is no jest indeed, but solemn earnest.

I saw him kneel to her ; I heard the
passion
Burn through his voice.'

Asan. And she ? What did my
lady ?
She did repulse him sternly ?

Lys. Nay, indeed,
She wept ; was greatly moved, and
whispered to him,
" I am a wife."

Asan. Peace, peace ! I will not
heat

Another word. How little do they
know thee,
My white, pure dove ! My Lord
Lysimachus,
Some glamour has misled thee.

Lys. Well, my lord,
I should rejoice to think it, but I cannot
Deny my eyes and ears. Is not this
noble
The brother of the lady who was once
At Bosphorus at Court, and now attends
The Lady Gycia ?

Asan. Ay, indeed he is.
Lys. Well, she is near at hand ; if
thy belief
Inclines not to my tale—which yet is
true—
Couldst thou not ask of her if ere your
marriage
Her brother was enamoured of your
wife,

And she of him ?
Asan. That might I do indeed.
But, sooth to say, I would not speak
again

With her you name ; and it may be
indeed,
I know her well, the Lady Gycia,
Who is angered with her for what cause
I know not,

Might well resent the converse.

Lys. Prince Asander,
There is no man so blind as he who
closes
His eyes to the light and will not have
it shine.
As thou dost now.

Asan. Then will I see this lady,
Though knowing it is vain.

[Enter ASANDER.]

Lys. I do not know
What he will hear, but this at least I
know :
That woman loves him, and will lie to
sow
Dissension 'twixt these lovers which
accomplished,
The rest is easy, and I hold this Chet-
son
To make or mar at will. Ha ! a good
thought.

I will send a message to the Lady
Gycia

Which shall ensure't. If she mislikes
her friend,
It is odds of ten to one some jealous
humour
Has caused it, or may grow of it.

[Writes.]
“ Dear lady,
Thou art wronged ; the Prince Asander
presently
Is with Irene alone. Seek them, and
wring
Confession of their fault.”

[Summons a Messenger.]
Ho there ! convey
These to the Lady Gycia, but stay
not
To tell her whence they come.

Mess. I go, my lord.

SCENE IV.—IRENE'S PRISON.

IRENE : afterwards ASANDER and
GYCIA.

Ire. To think that once I loved
that haughty woman !

Ah, that was long ago, before love came
To tear our lives asunder. Though her
power

Can pen me here a prisoner, yet I know
That I have pierced her heart. Oh, it
is sweet

To be revenged, and know that ven-
geance brings

Victory in its train ! If I had power
To make Asander jealous of this wonder,
Then all were easy. But I know no
means

Whereby from this strait prison I might
sow

Suspicion of her who has never given
A shadow of cause.

Attendant. The Lord Asander
comes.

Enter ASANDER.

Asan. Lady, I grieve that thou art
in this place,
And fain would set thee free. Tell me
what cause

Has brought thee hither.

Ire. Ask me not, my lord ;
I cannot tell thee.

Asan. Nay, but know I must,
To plead thy cause.

Ire. 'Twas too great love of thee,
The love which thou didst spurn, that
brought me here.

Asan. But how should that be so ?

Ire. The Lady Gycia,
Holding thee to thy promise that thou
wouldst not

Go hence—no, not to close thy father's
eyes—

Took umbrage that I spoke with scant
respect

Of such unreasoning and unnatural
bond

As that which she approves.

Asan. Then am I grateful
For thy good-will, and grieve that it
should bring thee

To pine a prisoner here, and will essay
What reason can to free thee.

Ire. Thanks, my lord,
I would that *thou* wert free. I knew
the King,
And did receive much fatherly affection
From that most reverend man. I grieve
to hear
That he lies sick, and would rejoice to
tend him

As if I were a daughter.

Asan. Gentle lady,
No other voice of sympathy than thine
Have I yet heard in Cherson, and I
thank thee
For thy good-will.

Ire. 'Tis always thine, my lord,
And more, though I should end my
wretched days
In prison for thy sake.

Asan. I thank thee, lady,
And fain would ask of thee a greater
kindness:
I would that thou wouldest tell me of
thy brother.

Ire. My brother Therdorus? What
of him?

Asan. This only, Did he, ere I
knew my wife,
Bear towards her a great though innocent love?

Ire. A great though innocent love?
Ay, a great love,

For certain. Spoke she not of it to
thee?

Asan. No word!

Ire. Ah! yet, maybe, 'twas innocent—

Nay, I believe it, though she spoke not
of it,

And 'tis the wont of wives to laugh and
boast

Of innocent conquests.

Asan. Nay, she spoke no word.

Ire. And did no other of thy friends
at Cherson

Tell thee? Why, 'twas the talk of all
the city

How close they grew together, till thy
coming

And the necessities of Cherson turned
Her eyes from him to thee.

Asan. And does he still
Bear love for her?

Ire. And does he still bear love?
Ay, passionate love. The heart which
truly loves

Puts not its love aside for ends of State,
Or marriage bonds, or what the dullard
law

Suffers or does not suffer, but grows
stronger

For that which seeks to thwart it.

Asan. And did she
My wife return this love?

Ire. Ay, so 'twas said.
Ask me no more, I pray!

Enter GYCIA unperceived.

Asan. Nay, by the love
Thou bearest to me, speak!

Gycia. My Lord Asander,
What dost thou with this woman thus
alone?

Asan. 'Twere best thou didst not
ask.

Gycia. I have a right ;
I will be answered. First, thou didst
deny
Thou knewest aught of her ; then said
her nature
Was such I might not call her friend,
or live
With her within four walls ; and now,
her fault—
Which she herself proclaimed—penning
her here
In a close prison, thou my husband
comest
To comfort her, 'twould seem—to travel
o'er
Again the old foul paths and secretly
To gloat on the old passion.

Asan. Nay, I came
Not for this cause, but one which I will
tell thee.

I came to question of thy former love.

Gycia. To question *her* of me ?

Asan. To know the cause
That made my wife, scarce one short
hour ago,

Within my home, when hardly I had
left her,
Receive alone a lover kneeling to her
With words of passionate love, and
whisper to him,
"I am a wife."

Gycia. Hast thou no shame,
Asander,
To speak such words to me before this
woman,
Who knows her brother's life ?

Ira. Nay, prithee, madam,
Appeal not to me thus ; I could say
much
On which I would keep silence.

Gycia. Thou base woman,
And thou poor dupe or most perfidious
man,

It were to honour ye to make defence
Against a wanton and her paramour ;
But thee, Asander, never will I take
To my heart again, till thou hast put
from thee

This lying accusation, and dost ask
Pardon that thou hast dared with this
base wretch
To impugn my honour.

Asan. Thou hast said no word
Of answer to my charge ; thy bold
defiance
Argues thy guilt.

Gycia. My guilt ? And canst
thou dare
To say this thing to me ? I will speak
no word ;

Denial were disgrace. Sir, I will have
you

Leave this place quickly.

Asan. Madam, I obey you.
[Exit.]

Gycia. And I too go. [Exit.]

Ira. I hold these hapless fools
In the hollow of my hand.

SCENE V.—OUTSIDE THE PALACE.

LYSIMACHUS and three Courtiers ;
afterwards ASANDER.

Lys. My lords, what have you to
report ? Have the men arrived ?

1st Court. For a week past they
have been arriving at the rate of fifty a
day. The ships anchor in due course.
At dead of night, when everything is
still, the merchandise is landed and
conveyed well-disguised to the disused
granaries adjoining Lamachus' palace,
with good store of arms and provisions.

2nd Court. Yes, and by the day of
the festival we shall have more than

five hundred well-armed men within the walls, who, while the people are feasting, will bear down all opposing forces and open the gates to the larger body, who will lie concealed in the grain-ships in the harbour.

Lys. Does no one suspect, think you, as yet?

1st Court. Not a soul. The stores are landed at midnight, and the place is haunted and full of noises.

3rd Court. Does the Prince know?

Lys. Not yet, not a word. I can't trust him with his blind love for his wife.

3rd Court. What if he will not be of us?

Lys. Then he shall be put under hatches at once for Bosphorus, and may take his wife with him if he pleases.

1st Court. But will he pardon the deed?

Lys. The lad is a good lad enough, but weak as water. The world always pardons successful enterprises. Besides, I am in great hopes that he has so quarrelled with the ruler of Cherson, and may be, moreover, so out of conceit with his wife, that we can do as we will with him.

2nd Court. But be prudent, my Lord Lysimachus, I beg, for we know not how far he is with us, and if he is against us now, it may take more than we know to keep our heads on our shoulders.

Lys. My lords, you shall not lose a drop of your blood. But here is my Lord Asander. He looks cast down enough, in all conscience.

Enter ASANDER.

Well, Prince, hast thou seen the lady?

Asan. Speak not to me of her, I pray.

I must leave this accursed place at once and for ever, and must take my wife with me. Once in Bosphorus, I may know again the happiness which is denied me here. I will not stay here a day. Is there any ship from Bosphorus in harbour? Get me away to-night secretly, and the Lady Gycia with me.

Lys. My lord, there are many ships here from Bosphorus, but none empty or which can be spared now; but it wants but two days to the festival, and if thou wilt tarry until then, it may be we can so arrange that either thou mayst set sail for Bosphorus at will or bring Bosphorus hither at will.

Asan. What do these words mean? You speak in riddles. I care not what becomes of me, but remember my honour, Lysimachus, my honour! If any scheme against the State of Cherson is in your mind, I will have none of it. I want nothing of these people, only to be allowed to turn my back upon them and their intrigues for ever, and to carry the wife whom I love far away from the air of chicane and base deceit which makes this Cherson a hell.

Lys. My Lord Asander, thou hast not forgot
Thy oath which thou didst swear ere
first you left
Our Bosphorus, that, come what fate
should come,

Thou wouldest not forget her. Now, as
Fate would have it,
These gentlemen and I, hearing report
Of the grand festival which now
approaches,
Have ta'en such measures as may make
our city

Mistress of this her rival. Day by day

Ships laden deep with merchandise
 cast anchor
 By Lamachus's palace, and unload
 At dead of night their tale of armed
 men,
 And by to-morrow night, which is the
 eve
 Of the feast, five hundred men-at-arms
 or more
 In a dark hall, long empty and disused,
 These fools deem haunted, where the
 sounds they make
 Seem not of earth, and none draw near
 to hear,
 Will lie concealed. These, when the
 festival
 Has spent itself, and the drowsed
 citizens,
 Heavy with meat and wine, are fast
 asleep,
 Will issue forth at midnight and will
 seize
 The guardians of the gates, and throw
 them open
 To an o'erwhelming force which fills
 the ships
 Which lie within the harbour. For the
 rest,
 Cherson is ours, thou free to go or stay,
 King if thou wilt; but this, my lord,
 know well—
 Even if thou hast no reverence for thy
 oath,
 No power on earth can free thee from
 thy bonds
 Or speed thee hence, if still this cursed
 State
 Keeps its free power. Therefore, look
 well to it.
Asan. I cannot do this thing. I
 am no thief
 Or midnight murderer, but a prince and
 soldier.

Place me in open battle, and I care
 not
 For bloodshed; but this murderous
 intrigue,
 I will have none o't.
Irys. Nay, my lord, in sooth,
 Why think of bloodshed? If our
 scheme go right
 (And nought can mar it now), what
 need of blood?
 These smooth knaves, though they
 fight behind their walls
 With cunning enginery, yet when they
 see
 Our army in their streets, will straight
 grow prudent
 And hug discretion. But, indeed, my
 lord,
 We have gone too far to pause, and if
 thou like not
 Our scheme, which makes for thee and
 for our State,
 We cannot risk that thou denounce our
 plan,
 And therefore, if thou wilt not join with
 us,
 The safety of ourselves and of the
 State
 Holds thee a prisoner pent in close
 duress
 Till victory is ours, and thou mayst
 take
 The fruit of others' daring, while thy
 wife
 Deserts her doubting and dishonoured
 lord
 For one who dares to act and play his
 part
 As a man should.
Asan. (after hesitation). I do not
 hold with you,
 That a man's oath can bind him to his
 God

To do what else were wrong. Yet,
since you swear
Your purpose is not bloodshed, and my
will
Is impotent to stay your choice, and
chiefly
Because I am cast down and sick at
heart,
And without any trust in God or man,
I do consent to your conspiracy,
Loving it not.

Lys. There spoke my lord the
Prince.

We will succeed or die.

Asan. I would sooner die.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—CHERSON. IRENE'S PRISON.

Irene; then the Gaoler's Child; afterwards GYCIA.

Ire. Ah me ! The heaviness of
prisoned days !
Heigho ! 'Tis weary work in prison
here.
What though I know no loss but
liberty,
Have everything at will—food, service,
all
That I should have, being free—yet
doth constraint
Poison life at its spring ; and if I
thought
This woman's jealous humour would
endure,
I would sooner be a hireling set to tend
The kine upon the plains, in heat or
cold,
Chilled through by the sharp east,
scorched by the sun,

So only I might wander as I would
At my own will, than weary to be free
From this luxurious cell. Hark !
[The tramp of armed men is heard.
What was that sound ?
I could swear I heard the measured
tramp of men
And ring of mail, yet is it but illusion.
Last night I thought I heard it as I lay
Awake at dead of night. Mere fantasy
Born of long solitude, for here there are
No soldiers nor mailed feet.

[Again heard.
Hark ! once again.
Nay, I must curb these fancies.

Enter Child.

Child. Gentle lady.
Ire. Speak, little one. Come
hither.
Child. Gentle lady,
My father, who is Warden of this
tower,
Bade me come hither and ask thee if
thou wouldest
That I should hold thy distaff, or might
tender
Some other service.

Ire. Ay, child ; a good thought.
Bring me my spinning-wheel.

[Child brings it.
Ire. (spinning). The light is fading
fast, but I would choose
This twilight, if thou wilt not be afraid
Of the darkness, little one.

Child. Nay, that I am not,
With one so good as thou.

Ire. Nay, child, it may be
I am not all thou think'st me.

Child. But, dear lady,
Are not all noble ladies good ?

Ire. Not all,
Nor many, maybe.

Child. To be sure they are not,
Else were they not imprisoned.

Ire. Little one,
Not all who pine in prison are not good,
Nor innocent who go free.

*Child.** The Lady Gycia,
Is she not good?

Ire. It may be that she is.
'Tis a vile world, my child.

Child. Nay, I am sure
The Lady Gycia is as white and pure
As are the angels. When my mother
died
She did commend me to her, and she
promised
To keep me always.

Ire. But she sent me here.
Child. Ah! lady, then I fear thou
art not good.

I am sorry for thee.

Ire. So, my child, am I.
[*The tramp of armed feet is heard again.*

Child. Ah! lady, what is that? I
am afraid.

Didst hear the ghostly feet?

Ire. What heardst thou, child?

Child. A tramp of armed men and

ring of mail.

Ire. Then, 'tis no fancy of my weary

brain.

If it comes again I must inquire into it.

'Tis passing strange. Be not afraid,

my child.

'Twas but the wind which echoed

through the void

Of the vast storehouses below us.

Come, [Spinning.

Let us to spinning. Twirl and twirl

and twirl;

'Tis a strange task.

Child. Lady, I love it dearly.

My mother span, and I would sit by her

The livelong day.

Ire. Didst ever hear the tale
Of the Fates and how they spin?

Child. I do not think so.
Wilt tell me?

Ire. There were three weird sisters
once,
Clotho and Lachesis and Atropos,
Who spun the web of fate for each new
life,
Sometimes, as I do now, a brighter
thread
Woven with the dark, and sometimes
black as night,

Until at last came Atropos and cut
The fine-worn life-thread thus.

[*Cuts the thread; the head of the spindle*
rolls away.]

Child. And hast thou cut
Some life-thread now?

Ire. My child, I am no Fate,
And yet I know not; but the spindle's
head
Rolled hence to yonder corner. Let us
seek it.

Hast found it?

Child. Nay, there is so little light,
I think that it has fallen in the crevice
Beneath yon panel.

Ire. Stoop and seek it, child.
Verchance the panel slides, and then,
it may be,
We shall let in the light.

[*Draws back the panel and discovers a*
bright light, files of armed men,
and ASANDER in the midst.

Child. Ay, there it is;
We have it, we have found it.

[*Sliding panel back again.*
Ire. What have we found?

What have we found? Yes, little one,
'tis found!
Run away now—I fain would be
alone—.

And come back presently.

[*Kisses Child, who goes.*

These were the sounds
I heard and thought were fancy's. All
is clear
As is the blaze of noon. The Prince
Asander

Is traitor to the State, and will o'er-
whelm it
When all the citizens are sunk in sleep
After to-morrow's feast. Well, what
care I?

He is not for me, whether we call him
King
Or Archon; and for these good men of
Cherson,
What is their fate to me? If he
succeed,
As now he must, since no one knows
the secret,
Twill only be a change of name—no
more.
The King and Queen will hold a
stately Court
And live contented when the thing is
done,

And that is all. For who will call it
treason

When victory crowns the plot? But
stay! a gleam
Of new-born hope. What, what if it
should fail
As I could make it fail? What if this
woman,

Full of fantastic reverence for the dead,
And nourished on her cold republican
dream,
Should learn the treason ere 'twas done
and mar it?

Would not Asander hate her for the
failure?

And she him for the plot? I know her
well,

I know her love for him, but well I
know

She is so proud of her Athenian blood
And of this old republic, she would
banish
Her love for less than this. Once
separated,
The Prince safe over seas in Bosphorus,
His former love turned to injurious
pride,
I might prevail! I would!

Re-enter CHILD.

Nay, little one,
We will spin no more to-day. I prithee
go

And seek the Lady Gycia. Say to her,
By all the memory of our former love
I pray that she will come to me at
once.

Lose not a moment. [*Exit Child.*
Hark! the tramp again;
Again the ring of mail. I wonder
much

If she shall hear it first, or first the eye
Shall slay her love within her.

Enter GYCIA.

Gycia. Thou dost ask
My presence; wherefore is it?

Ire. Gycia,
Thou dost not love me, yet would I
requite

Thy wrong with kindness. That thy
love was false

To thee, thou knowest, but it may be
still

There is a deeper falsehood than to
thee,

And thou shalt know it. Dost thou
hear that sound?

[*The tramp of men again heard.*
What means it, think you?

Gycia. Nay, I cannot tell.
'Tis like the tramp of armed men.

Ire. It is;
And who are they?

Gycia. Young citizens of Cherson,
Maybe, rehearsing for to-morrow's
pageant
And the procession. [Going.

Ire. Stay, thou stubborn woman,
Canst bear to see, though the sight
blight thy life?

Gycia. I know not what thou
wouldest, but I can bear it.

Ire. Though it prove thy love a
traitor?

Gycia. That it will not!
Ire. Then, make no sound, but see
what I will show thee.

Look now! Behold thy love!

[Draws back panel, and discovers
ASANDER with the soldiers of
Bosphorus standing in line.
ASANDER'S voice heard.

Asan. At stroke of midnight
To-morrow night be ready.

Soldiers. Ay, my lord.
[GYCIA tottering back. IRENE slides
back the panel, and GYCIA sets
her back against it, half fainting;
IRENE regarding her with
triumph.

Gycia. Was that my husband? and
those men around him

Soldiers of Bosphorus, to whom he
gave

Some swift command? What means
it all, ye saints?

What means it? This the husband of
my love,

Upon whose breast I have lain night
by night

For two sweet years—my husband
whom my father

Loved as a son, whose every thought I
knew,

Or deemed I did, lurking in ambush
here

Upon the eve of our great festival,
Scheming some bloody treachery to take
Our Cherson in the toils? Oh, 'tis
too much;

I cannot trust my senses! 'Twas a
dream!

Ire. No dream, but dreadful truth!

Gycia. Thou cruel woman,
How have I harmed thee, thou shouldst
hate me thus?

But 'twas no dream. Why was it else
that he,

But for some hateful treachery, devised
This festival? Why was it that he grew
So anxious to go hence and take me
with him,

But that guilt made him coward, and
he feared

To see his work? Oh, love for ever
lost,

And with it faith gone out! what is't
remains

But duty, though the path be rough
and trod

By bruised and bleeding feet? Oh,
what is it

Is left for me in life but death alone,
Which ends it?

Ire. Gycia, duty bids thee banish
Thy love to his own State, and then
disclose

The plot thou hast discovered. It may
be

That thou mayst join him yet, and yet
grow happy.

Gycia. Never! For duty treads
another path
Than that thou knowest. I am my
father's daughter.

It is not mine to pardon or condemn ;
That is the State's alone. 'Tis for the
State
To banish, not for me, and therefore
surely
I must denounce these traitors to the
Senate,
And leave the judgment theirs.

Ire. (kneeling). Nay, nay, I pray
thee,
Do not this thing ! Thou dost not know
how cruel
Is State-craft, or what cold and stony
hearts
Freeze in their politic breasts.
Gycia. Thou kneel'st to me
To spare my husband ! Think'st thou
I love him less
Than thou dost, wanton ?

Ire. Gycia, they will kill him.
Get him away to-night to Bosphorus.
Thou dost not know these men !

Gycia. I know them not ?
I who have lived in Cherson all my
days,
And trust the State ? Nay, I will get
me hence.
And will denounce this treason to the
Senate.
There lies my duty clear, and I will
do it ;
I fear not for the rest. The State is
clement
To vanquished foes, and doubtless will
find means

To send them hence in safety. For
myself
I know not what may come—a broken
heart,
Maybe, and death to mend it. But
for thee,
Thou shameless wanton, if thou breathe
a sound .

Or make a sign to them, thou diest to-
night

With torture.

Ire. Spare him ! Do not this
thing, Gycia ! [Exit Gycta.
O God, she is gone ! he is lost ! and I
undone !

[Swoons.]

SCENE II.—ROOM IN LAMACHUS'S
PALACE.

LYSIMACHUS, MEGACLES, Courtiers;
afterward, ASANDER.

Jp. Well, good Megacles, I hope
you are prepared to carry out your
function. It will be a busy and anxious
day to-morrow, no doubt, and most of
us will be glad when midnight strikes.

Meg. My Lord Lysimachus, I hope
so. I have not closed an eye for the
last two nights. As to the Procession,
I flatter myself that no better-arranged
pomp has ever desfiled before Cæsar's
Palace. It will be long, it will be
splendid, it will be properly marshalled.
There is no other man in the Empire
who knows the distinctions of rank or
the mysteries of marshalling better than
I do. Look at the books I have studied.
There is the treatise of the Learned and
Respectable Symmachus on Processions.
That is one. There is the late divine
Emperor Theodosius on Dignities and
Titles of Honour. That is two. There
is our Learned and Illustrious Cham-
berlain Procopius's treatise on the
office and duties of a Count of the
Palace. That, as no doubt you know,
is in six large volumes. That is three,
or, nay, eight volumes. Oh, my poor
head ! And I have said nothing of the
authorities on Costume—a library, I

assure you, in themselves. Yes, it has been an anxious time, but a very happy one. I wish our young friends here would devote a little more time to such serious topics, and less to such frivolities as fighting and making love. The latter is a fine art, no doubt, and, when done according to rule, is well enough; but as for fighting, getting oneself grimed with dust and sweat, and very likely some vulgar churl's common blood to boot—pah! it is intolerable to think of it.

1st Court. Ah! good Megacles, I am afraid that the world cannot spare its soldiers yet for many years to come. So long as there is evil in the world, and lust of power and savagery and barbarism, so long, depend upon it, there is room and need for the soldier.

Meg. Certainly, my lord, certainly; and besides, they are very highly decorative too. Nothing looks better to my mind at a banquet than bright gay faces and lithe young figures set in a shining framework of mail. By the way, my Lord Lysimachus, it was kind of you to provide our procession with a strong detachment of fine young soldiers from Bosphorus. I have secured a prominent place for them, and the effect will be perfect. I trust the Lady Melissa will like it.

Lys. My lord, you are mistaken; there are no soldiers from Bosphorus here.

Meg. But I was with the Prince last night, and saw them.

Lys. I tell you you are mistaken. There are none here. Do you understand me? There are none here.

and Court. Nay, indeed, my Lord Megacles. We were trying, with a

view to the pageant, how a number of young men of Cherson would look in the array of Bosphorus; but we gave it up, since we feared that they would bear them so clumsily that they would mar the whole effect.

Meg. Ah, that explains it; quite right, quite right. Well, I see I was mistaken. But I wish I could have had soldiers from Bosphorus. They are the one thing wanting to make to-morrow a perfect success, as the Lady Melissa said.

Lys. They are indeed, as you say. But, my Lord Megacles, pray do not whisper abroad what you have said here; these people are so jealous. They would grow sullen, and spoil the pageant altogether.

Meg. Ah, my lord, you have a good head. I will not breathe a word of it till the day is done.

Lys. Thanks, my lord, and as I know you will be weary with the long day's work and your great anxieties, I am going to lay a little friendly compulsion upon you. You must leave the banquet to-morrow and go to rest by eleven o'clock at latest.

Meg. Well, my lord, I am not so young as I was, and if I have your permission to leave before all is over, well and good. No one knows what an anxious day is before me, and I have no doubt I shall have earned my night's rest by then. But I have much yet to do, so with your permission I will wish you good night.

[*Exit MEGACLES, bowing low to each other with exaggerated gestures.*

Lys. Poor soul, poor soul! If any fight comes, it would be as cruel to let him take his part with men as it would be if he were a woman or a child.

Enter ASANDER.

Welcome, my Lord Asander. Hast thou seen our men, and are they ready for to-morrow?

Asan. I have just come from them, and they are ready, But I am not. I pray you, let this be; Send back these men to-night. I am oppressed

By such o'ermastering presages of ill As baffle all resolve.

Lys. My Lord Asander, It is too late. Wouldst thou, then, break thy oath? Wouldst thou live here a prisoner, nor behold Thy father, though he die? Wouldst thou thy country Should spurn thee as the traitor whose malignance Blighted her hard-won gains? It is too late!

It is too late!

Asan. I am grown infirm of will As any dotard. I will go on now So that thou dost no murder.

Lys. Why was it We came in such o'erwhelming force, but that We sought to shed no blood?

Asan. I will be ready, Though with a heavy heart. To-morrow night At stroke of twelve, when all the feast is done, And all asleep, we issue from the palace, Seize the guards at their posts, and open wide The gates to the strong force which

from the ships

At the same hour shall land. The citizens,

Heavy with wine, will wake to find their city

Our own beyond recall.

Lys. Ay, that's the scheme, And nought can mar it now. Good night, my lord.

Sleep well; there is much to do.

Asan. Good night, my lords! [Exit ASANDER.

Lys. No bloodshed! Why, what fools love makes of men!

I have seen this very lad dash through the ranks

Of hostile spearmen, cut and hack and thrust

As in sheer sport. There will be blood shed, surely,

Unless these dogs have lost their knack of war

As he has; but we have them unprepared,

And shall prevail, and thou shalt be avenged,

My father slain, and thou, my murdered brother,

Shalt be avenged! My lords, you know what work

Is given each to do. Be not too chary

Of your men's swords; let them strike sudden terror.

Slay all who do resist, or if they do not,

Yet slay them still. My lords, give you good night.

To-morrow at midnight, at the stroke of twelve—

At the stroke of twelve!

[Exeunt omnes.

SCENE III.—THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
OF THE SENATE OF CHERSON.

ZETHO and Senators ; afterwards
GYCIA.

Zet. Most worthy brethren, Senators
of Cherson,
In great perplexity of mind and will
I summon ye to-night. The Lady
Gycia,
Our Lamachus's daughter, sends re-
quest,
Urgent as 'twere of instant life and
death,
That I should call ye here. What care
can move
Such anxious thought in her, on this the
eve
Of the high festival herself has founded,
I know not, but 'twould seem the very
air
Is full of floating rumours, vague alarms,
Formless suspicions which elude the
grasp,
Unspoken presages of coming ill
Which take no shape. For whence
should danger come?
We are at peace with all. Our former
foe
Is now our dearest friend ; the Prince
Asander,
Though of a hasty spirit and high
temper,
Dwells in such close, concordant har-
mony
With his loved wife that he is wholly
ours ;
And yet though thus at peace, rumours
of war
And darkling plots beset us. Is it not
thus?
Have ye heard aught?

1st Sen. Zetho, 'tis true. Last
night, a citizen
Sware he heard clang of arms and ring
of mail
At midnight by the house of Lamachus !
2nd Sen. My freedman, coming
home at grey of dawn,
Saw a strange ship unload her mer-
chandise,
And one bale chanced to fall, and from
it came
Groanings and drops of blood !
3rd Sen. Two nights ago,
The ways being white with snow, I on
the quay
Saw the thick-planted marks of armed
feet ;
But, rising with the dawn, I found the
place
Swept clean with care !
Zet. Brethren, I know not what
These things portend.

Enter GYCIA.

But see, she comes ! Good daughter,
Why is thy cheek so pale ?
Gycia. This is the wont
Of women. Grief drives every drop of
blood
Back to the breaking heart, which love
calls forth
To mantle on the cheek. Sirs, I have
come
On such an errand as might drive a
woman
Stronger than I to madness ; I have
come
To tell you such a tale as well might
fetter
My tongue and leave me speechless.
Pity me
If I do somewhat wander in my
talk !

'Tis scarce an hour ago, that in my house,
 Drawing some secret panel in the wall,
 I saw the long hall filled with armed men
 Of Bosphorus, and at their head—O Heaven,
 I cannot say it!—at their head I saw My husband, my Asander, my own love,
 [Senators rise with strong emotion. Who ordered them and bade them all stand ready To-morrow night at midnight. What means this? What else than that these traitorous bands shall slay Our Cherson's liberties, and give to murder Our unsuspecting people, whom the feast Leaves unprepared for war? I pray you, sirs, Lose not one moment. Call the citizens To arms while yet 'tis time! Defeat this plot! Do justice on these traitors! Save the city, Though I am lost!

Zet. Daughter, thy loyal love To our dear city calls for grateful honour From us who rule. In thy young veins the blood Of patriot Lamachus flows to-day as strong As once it did in his; nay, the warm tide Which stirred the lips of bold Demos-thenes And all that dauntless band who of old time Gave heart and life for Athens, still is thine.

In our Hellenic story, there is none Who has done more than thou, who hast placed love, Wedlock, and queenly rule, and all things dear To a tender woman's heart, below the State— A patriot before all. Is there no favour A State preserved may grant thee? *Cycia.* Noble Zetho, I ask but this. I know my husband's heart, How true it was and loyal. He is led, I swear, by evil counsels to this crime: And maybe, though I seek not to excuse him, It was the son's love for his dying sire, Whom he should see no more, that scheming men Have worked on to his ruin. Banish him To his own city, though it break my heart, But harm him not; and for those wretched men Whose duty 'tis to obey, shed not their blood, But let the vengeance of our city fall Upon the guilty only. *Zet.* Brethren all, Ye hear what 'tis she asks, and though to grant it Is difficult indeed, yet her petition Comes from the saviour of the State. I think We well may grant her prayer. Though well I know How great the danger, yet do I believe It may be done. Is it so, worthy brethren?
 - [Senators nod assent.] Daughter, thy prayer is granted.

Gycia. Sirs, I thank you ;
I love you for your mercy.

Zet. For the rest,
I counsel that we do not rouse the city.
'Twere of no use to-night to set our
arms,

Blunt with long peace and rusted with
disease,

Against these banded levies. By to-
morrow—

And we are safe till then—we shall
have time

To league together such o'erwhelming
force

As may make bloodshed needless, vain
their plot,

And mercy possible. Meantime, dear
lady,

Breathe not a word of what thine eyes
have seen,

But bear thyself as though thou hadst
seen nothing,

And had no care excepting to do honour
To thy dead sire ; and when the weary
day

Tends to its close, school thou thy heavy
heart,

And wear what mask of joy thou canst,
and sit

Smiling beside thy lord at the high
feast,

Where all will meet. See that his cup
is filled

To the brim ; drink healths to Bosphorus
and Cherson.

Seem thou to drink thyself, having a
goblet

Of such a colour as makes water blush
Rosy as wine. When all the strangers'
eyes

Grow heavy, then, some half an hour
: or more

From midnight, rise as if to go to rest,

Bid all good night, and thank them for
their presence.

Then, issuing from the banquet-hall,
lock fast

The great doors after thee, and bring
the key

To us, who here await thee. Thus
shalt thou

Save this thy State, and him thy love,
and all.

For we will, ere the fateful midnight
comes,

Send such o'erwhelming forces to sur-
round them

That they must needs surrender, and
ere dawn

Shall be long leagues away. We will
not shed

A drop of blood, my daughter.

Gycia. Noble Zetho,
I thank you and these worthy senators.
I knew you would be merciful. I thank
you,
And will obey in all things.

[Exit GYCIA.]

Bardanes, 1st Sen. She is gone ;
I durst not speak before her. Dost
thou know, "Good Zetho, how infirm for war our
State
After long peace has grown ? I doubt
if all
The men whom we might arm before
the hour
Are matched in numbers with those
murderous hordes ;
While in experience of arms, in training,
In everything that makes a soldier
strong,
We are no match for them. Our para-
mount duty
Is to the State alone, not to these
pirates

Who lie in wait to slay us ; nor to one
Who, woman-like, knows not our
strength or weakness,
Nor cares, if only she might wring a
promise
To spare her traitorous love. But we
have arts

Which these barbarians know not,
quenchless fires
Which in one moment can enwrap
their stronghold

In one red ring of ruin. My counsel
is,

That ere the hour of midnight comes
we place

Around the palace walls on every
side

Such store of fuel and oils and cunning
drugs

As at one sign may leap a wall of
fire

Impassable, and burn these hateful
traitors

Like hornets in their nest.

Zetho. Good brethren all,
Is this your will? Is it faith? Is it
honoar, think you,

To one who has given all, for us to
break

Our solemn plighted word?

and Sen. We will not break it;
We shed no drop of blood. The State
demands it;

The safety of the State doth override
All other claim. The safety of the
State

Is more than all!

All the Senators, with uplifted arms.
Ay, Zetho, more than all!

Zetho. Then, be it as you will. See,
therefore, to it;

Take measures that your will be done,
not mine.

Though I approve not, yet I may not
set
My will against the universal voice.
Save us our Cherson. For the rest I
care not,
Only I grieve to break our solemn
promise
To Lamachus's child. Poor heart !
poor heart !

ACT V.

SCENE I.—OUTSIDE LAMACHUS'S
PALACE.

MEGACLES, LYSIMACHUS, Courtiers,
and Citizens of Cherson.

Meg. Oh, this has been a happy
day. All has gone admirably. Not a
hitch in all the arrangements. Pre-
cedence kept, rank observed, dresses
all they should be. I do not, I really
do not think, though I say it who
should not, that the Imperial Chamber-
lain at Constantinople could have con-
ducted the matter better.

1st Court. Nay, that he could not,
good Megacles. Let us hope that
what remains to do will go as smoothly.

Meg. What remains? Doubtless you
mean the banquet. That is all arranged
long ago under three heads. First, the
order of entering the hall; second, the
order of the seats; third, the order of
going forth.

Lys. Doubtless the last will arrange
itself. Remember, the only order of
going to be observed is this, that thou
get thyself gone, and all the guests from
Cherson gone, fally half an hour before
midnight.

Meg. But, my lord, that is impos-

sible ; you ask too much. How long do you suppose it will take, at a moderate computation, to get one hundred men of ill-defined rank out of a room with a decent regard for Precedence. Why, I have seen it take an hour at the Palace, where everybody knew his place, and here I cannot undertake to do it under two.

Lys. My friend, you will get it done ; you will waive ceremony. None but the Prince and ourselves must remain within half an hour of midnight, and the hall must be cleared.

Meg. Ah, well, my Lord Lysimachus, the responsibility rests with you ; I will have none of it. It is as much as my reputation is worth. But if I do this, cannot you let me have a guard of honour of armed men to stand at intervals along the hall. I have been longing for them all day.

Lys. (angrily). Peace, fool ! I have told you before we have no soldiers here.

(People of Cherson overhearing him.)
1st Cit. Didst hear that old man ? He believes there are soldiers here. Whence do they come ? and why did the other check him ?

Meg. Well, my Lord Lysimachus, if not soldiers, men-at-arms, and these there certainly are, and highly decorative too.

2nd Cit. I hate these Bosphorians. What if the rumour should be true ? Pass the word to the citizens that they sleep not to-night, but keep their arms ready for what may come. We are a match for them, whatever may be their design. To-morrow we will probe this matter to its depths.

3rd Court. Depend upon it, there

is no time to lose if we would forestall these fellows. But here comes the procession to the banqueting-hall.

[Citizens going to banquet two and two.]

Meg. (with a gold wan.). This way, gentlemen ; this way, masters and mistresses ; this way, Respectables !

[Accompanies them to the end of the stage towards the banqueting-hall in the distance. Returns to exit another party. Musicians, &c.

Enter Senators, two and two.

Meg. (bowing profoundly three times). Most Illustrious Senators ! this way, your Highnesses ; this way.

Enter MELISSA and other Ladies.

(To MELISSA) Fairest and loveliest of your adorable sex, your slave prostrates himself before your stainless and beatific feet (bowing low and kissing his fingers). Illustrious Ladies, I pray you to advance.

Lys. (with Courtiers standing apart). A good appetite, my friends. Enjoy yourselves while you may.

Bard. We are quite ready, my Lord Lysimachus. Are you not (with a sneer) for the banquet ?

Lys. In good time, in good time. If they only knew. *[Aside.]*

Bard. (overhearing). If you knew all, my friends.

Meg. (returning). I pray you, most Illustrious Senators, to excuse the absence of a guard of honour.

Bard. Nay, nay : we are peaceful people, and have no armed men nearer than Bosphorus, as my Lord Lysimachus knows. There are plenty in that favoured State, no doubt.

Iys. (*confused*). What does this
involence mean? I would the hour
were come.

Enter ZETHO, with his retinue.

Meg. Your Gravity, Your Sincerity,
Your Sublime and Wonderful Magni-
tude, Your Illustrious and Magnificent
Highness, I prostrate myself before
Your Altitude. Will You deign to
walk this way?

Zetho. My lord, I am no Cesar,
but a simple citizen of Cherson, called
by my fellows to preside over the State.
Use not to me these terms, I pray of
you, but lead on quickly.

Meg. I prostrate myself before Your
Eminence.

Enter ASANDER and GYCIA.

Meg. (returning). Noble Prince,
will your Illustrious Consort and your-
self deign to follow me?

Asan. Nay, good Megacles, will
you and these gentlemen go first, I have
a word to say to the Lady Gycia. We
will be with you before the guests are
seated.

Meg. I obey, my Lord Asander,
and will awnit you at the door.

[*MEGACLES, LYSIMACHUS, and the
rest, pass on.*

Asan. Gycia, though we have passed
from amity
And all our former love, yet would I
pray you,
By our sweet years of wedded happi-
ness,
Give ear to me a moment. It may
be
That some great shock may come to
set our lives
For evermore apart.

Gycia. Ah yes, Asander—
For evermore apart!

Asan. And I would faint,
If it must be, that thou shouldst know
to-night

That never any woman on the earth
Held me one moment in the toils of
love

Except my wife.

Gycia. What! not Irene's self?

Asan. Never, I swear by Heaven.
She was a woman
In whom a hopeless passion burnt the
springs

Of maiden modesty. I never gave her
The solace of a smile.

Gycia. Dost thou say this?
Is thy soul free from all offence with her,
If thou camest now to judgment?

Asan. Ay, indeed,
Free as a child's.

Gycia. Oh, my own love! my dear!
Ah no! too late, too late!

[*Embraces him.*

Asan. I ask thee not
Counter assurance, since I know thy
truth. —

Gycia. Speakst thou of Theodorus?

He loved me
Before I knew thee, but I loved no man
Before I met Asander. When he knelt
That day, it was in pity for my grief,
Thinking thee false, and all his buried
love

Burst into passionate words, which on
the instant
I as thy wife repelled.

Asan. Oh, perfect woman!
[*They embrace.*

O God, it is too late! Come, let us go;
The guests are waiting for us. What
can Fate

Devise to vanquish Love. [*Exeunt.*

Enter two drunken Labourers of Cherson, bearing faggot and straw.

1st Lab. Well, friend, what kind of day has it been with you?

2nd Lab. Oh, white day, a happy day! Plenty of food, plenty of wine, raree shows without end, such processions as were never seen—the very model of a democracy; nothing to pay, and everybody made happy at the expense of the State. I have lived in Cherson, man and boy, for fifty years, and I never saw anything to compare with it. Here's good luck to Lamachus's memory, say I, and I should like to celebrate his lamented decease as often as his daughter likes.

1st Lab. Didst know him, citizen?

2nd Lab. No, not I. He has been dead these two years. Time he was forgotten, I should think. They don't commemorate poor folk with all these fal-lals and follies.

1st Lab. Well, citizen, there is one comfort—the great people don't enjoy themselves as we do. Did you ever see such a set of melancholy, frowning, anxious faces as the grandes carried with them to-day? And as for the Prince and the Lady Gycia, I don't believe they spoke a word the livelong day, though they walked together. That is the way with these grandes. When you and I quarrel with our wives, it is hammer and tongs for five minutes, and then kiss and make friends.

2nd Lab. And fancy being drilled by that old fool from Bosphorus—"Most Illustrious, this is your proper place;" "Respectable sir, get you back there" (*mimics MEGACLES*), and so forth.

1st Lab. Well, well; it is good to be

content. But I warrant^t we are the only two unhappy creatures in Cherson to-night, who have the ill fortune to be sober. And such wine too, and nothing to pay!

2nd Lab. Never mind, citizen, we shall be paid in meal or malt, I dare say, and we are bound to keep sober. By the way, it is a curiously contrived bonfire this.

1st Lab. It will be the crowning triumph of the whole festival, the senator said.

2nd Lab. But who ever heard of a bonfire on a large scale like this, so close to an old building? You know our orders: we are to place lines of faggots and straw close to the building on every side, well soaked with oil, and certain sealed vessels full of a secret compound in the midst of them. And just before midnight we are to run with torches and set light to the whole bonfire, to amuse the noble guests at the banquet.

[IRENE at a window, overhearing.

1st Lab. Ah! do you not see? It is a device of the Scilate to startle our friends from Bosphorus. The faggots and straw blaze up fiercely round the wall; then, when all is confusion, the substance in the sealed vessels escapes and at once puts out the fire, and the laugh is with us. Our friends from Bosphorus know what we can do in chemistry before now.

2nd Lab. Faith, a right merry device! Ha! ha! What a head thou hast, citizen! Well, we must go on with our work. Lay the faggots evenly.

Ire. (at the window above). Great God! what is this?

We are doomed to die!

Good friends!
Know you my brother, the Lord Theodo-
dorus?
I have something urgent I would say to
him.
I will write it down, and you shall give
it him
When he comes forth from the banquet.

[Disappears.]

1st Lab. Good my lady. Her
brother, too, she calls him. I go bail
it is her lover, and this is an assignation.
Well, well, we poor men must not be
too particular.

2nd Lab. No, indeed; but let us
get on with our work, or we shall never
finish in time.

Ire. (reappearing). Here it is. Give
it him, I pray, when he comes forth.
'Tis a thing of life and death.

1st Lab. So they all think,
Poor love-sick fools!

Ire. See, here is gold for you—
'Tis all I have; but he will treble it,
If you fail not.

1st Lab. Lady, we shall be here,
We must be here. Fear not, we shall
not miss him.

SCENE II.—THE BANQUET HALL.

*At a table, on a dais, Zetho, Asander,
Gycia, and Senators; Lysimachus,
and Courtiers of Sospheirus. Mag-
nates of Cherson at cross tables.
Asander, Lysimachus, the Cour-
tiers, and Senators seem flushed with
wine.*

Zetho. I drink to him whose
gracious memory
We celebrate to-day. In all our Cher-
son,

Which boasts descent from the Athenian
race,
Who one time swayed the world, there
was no man,
Nor ever had been, fired with deeper
love
Of this our city, or more heartfelt
pride
In our republican rule (LYSIMACHUS
shouts), which freeborn men
Prize more than life. I do not seek to
bind
Those who, long unmixed under kingly
rule,
Give to the Man the love we bear the
State;
But never shall the name of King be
heard
In this our Cherson.

Lys. Archon, 'twere unwise
To risk long prophecies.

Bard. Be silent, sir,
If you would not offend.

Zetho, I bid you all
Drink to the memory of Lamachus
And weal to our Republic.

Lys. Shall we drink
Its memory, for it has not long to live,
If it be still alive?

Bard. It will outlive thee.
Thou hast not long to live.

Lys. Longer than thou,
If swords be sharp.

Zetho. I pray you, gentlemen,
Bandy not angry words.

Gycia. My Lord Asander,
Thy cup is empty. Shall I fill it for
thee?

Thou lovedst Lamachus?

Asan. Ay, that I did;
And I love thee. But I have drunk
enough.
I must keep cool to-night.

Gycia. Nay; see, I fill
My glass to drink with thee.

Asan. Well, well, I drink,
But not to the Republic.

Gycia. Ah! my lord,
There is a gulf still yawns 'twixt thee
and me

Which not the rapture of recovered love
Can ever wholly bridge. To my dead
father

I drink, and the Republic!

Lys. Which is dead.

Bard. Nay, sir, but living, and
shall live when thou

Liest rotting with thy schemes.

Enter MEGACLES.

Meg. My Lord Asander,
A messenger from Bosphorus, just
landed,
Has bid me give thee this.

[*Gycia ASANDER letter.*

Asan. (reading) "My Lord, the
King
Is dead, asking for thee." Oh,
wretched day!
Had I but gone to him, and left this
place

Of sorrow ere he died!

Gycia. My love, my dear!
Thou wilt go hence too late. I would
indeed
The law had let thee go. Sorrow like
this
Draws parted lives in one, and knits
anew

The rents which time has made.

Lys. The King is dead!
Ay, then long live the King of Bos-
phorus!

And more ere long!

Bard. Think you that he will live
To wear his crown?

Zetho. Brethren, 'tis hour is late,
And draws to midnight, and 'tis time
that all

Should rest for whom rest is. (*To
BARDANES aside*) We must con-
sider

What change of policy this weighty
change

Which makes Asander King may work
in us.

Bard. (aside). Nay, nay, no change!
He is a murderer still,
And shall be punished were he thrice
a king.

Asan. Good night to all. And
thou, good Megacles,
Thou wert my father's servant, take thy
rest.

Go hence with these.

Meg. I have no heart to marshal
These dignitaries forth. My King is
dead;

I am growing old and spent.

Zetho. Daughter, remember
Thy duty to the State.

Gycia. I will, good Zetho.
I am my father's daughter. Gentle
Sirs

And Ladies all, good night.

[*Exeunt omnes except ASANDER and
GYCIA; LYSIMACHUS and Cour-
tiers by one door, then the Cher-
sonites by another opposite.*

Asan. Dearest of women,
How well this fair head will become a
crown!

I know not how it is, but now this blow
Has fallen, it does not move me as I
thought.

I am as those who come in tottering
age

Even to life's verge, whom loss of
friend or child

Touches not deeply, since the dead
they love

Precede them but a stage upon the road
Which they shall tread to-morrow.

 Yet am I

Young, and thou too, my Gycia ; we
should walk

The path of life together many years,
But that some strange foreboding
troubles me.

For oh, my dear ! now that the sun of
 love

Beams on our days again, my worth-
less life

Grows precious, and I tremble like a
coward

At dangers I despised. Tell me, my
 Gycia,

Though I am true in love, wouldst thou
forgive me

If I were false or seemed false to thy
State ?

Hast thou no word for me ? May I
not tell thee

My secret, which so soon all men shall
know,

And ask thy pardon for it ?

Gycia. Say on, Asander.

Asan. Know, then, that soldiers
sent from Bosphorus

Have long time hid within our palace
here—

Long time before I knew, or I had
nupt

The treason in the bud ; and in an hour
Or less from when we speak, they will
 go forth,

When all the citizens are wrapt in sleep
After the toilsome day, and seize the
gates,

And open to the army which lies hid
On board the ships without. They will
not shed

The blood of any, since the o'erwhelm-
ing force

Will make resistance vain. I never
liked

The plot, I swear to thee ; but, all
being done, *

And I a subject, dared not disavow
That which was done without me.
 But I have forced

A promise that no blood be spilt.

Gycia. Asander,
I have known it all, and have dis-
covered all [ASANDER starts.]

Thy secret to the Senate ! But I knew
not,

Save by the faith that is the twin with
love,

That thou didst follow only in this
plot,

And wert unwilling ; and I do rejoice
Thy hands are free from blood. But
oh, my love.,

Break from these hateful men ! Thou
art now a King,

Thou canst command. Come, let us
fly together ;

There yet is time ! I tell thee that this
plot

Is doomed to ruin. Ere the morning
dawns,

All but the guilty leaders will be sent
Prisoners to Bosphorus, and thou with
them.

I have gained this on my knees ; but
for the guilty

The State has punishments.

Asan. Gycia, thou wouldst not
That I should break my faith ? 'Tis a
King's part

To keep faith, though he die. But
when they have seized

The city, then, using my kingly office,
I will undo the deed, and make alliance

With Cherson, and this done I will
depart,

Taking my Queen with me.

Gycia. Then must I go ;
I cannot live without thee.

Asan. Now to rest,
If not to sleep.

Gycia. Good night, my love ; fare-
well.

Asan. Nay, not farewell, my love !

Gycia. Ah yes, farewell !
Farewell ! farewell for ever ! [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.—OUTSIDE THE BANQUET
HALL. DARKNESS.

Gycia hurriedly descends the steps,
closing the great doors of the banquet
hall softly.

Gycia. I hear no sound within ; the
lights are gone,
And all the hall is dark. These doors
alone

Of all the many outlets of the palace
Remain unlocked. There is not now a
moment

To lose ere midnight comes, and here I
hold
The safety of our Cherson. Oh, my
love !

I could not tell thee all, nor recom-
pense

Thy faith in me, since duty held me
fast—

My duty, which should also prove thy
safety,

For now the solemn promise of the
State

Is pledged to hold thee harmless, and
defeat

The shameful plot I knew was never
thine,

Without one drop of bloodshed. All
my path

Shows clear as noonday, and I save our
city

And those who with thee err in inno-
cence.

Why do I hesitate ? Yet does some dark
And dreadful presage of impending ill
So haunt me that I know not how to
face it.

I dare not do it. I must stay with
him,

Or bring him forth with me.

[Ascends the steps, throws open the
doors, and finds all darkness and
silence.

Asander ! husband !
It is thy wife who calls ! Come forth,
Asander ! [Listens.

Nay, there is no one there. I cannot
stay ;

This is mere folly. I must keep my
word ;

There's not a moment's time, or all is
lost.

Which is the key ?

[Closes the doors and locks them with
a clang.

I must go forth alone
To the Senate-chamber. I have saved
our Cherson

And my Asander !

[Totters down the steps and exit
hurriedly.

SCENE IV.—THE SENATE-CHAMBER.

Zetho and Senators ; afterwards
Gycia.

Zetho. What is the hour ?

Bardanes. It wants five minutes only
To midnight. Think you she will come ?

Zetho. I know her.
She is the soul of honour, and would
keep
Her word if 'twere her death.

Bard. But would she keep it
If 'twere her lover's?

Zetho. She thinks not that it is,
Nor should it be, indeed, were we but
true

As I believe her.

Bard. True! There is no truth
In keeping faith with murderers; they
must perish

In the same net which they laid
privily

Against a faithful city.

Enter GYCIA, tottering in, with the keys.

Zetho. Hail, noble daughter! Thou
hast saved the State.

I knew thou wouldst not fail us.

Gycia. See, good Zetho,
The proof that I have done my part to
you.

There are the master keys of all the
doors

Within the palace. When I closed the
last,

A few brief minutes since, there was no
sound

Nor light in hall or chamber; every
court

Was silent as the grave.

Bard. Ay, as the grave
It is, or will be soon.

Gycia. What mean you, sir,
I pray you? I am but a timid woman,
Full of foreboding fears and dread of
ill,

And such a doubt doth overspread my
soul,

Hearing thy words, I think I shall go
mad.

Nay, Zetho, he is safe; I have your
promise

Thou wouldst not harm him. An o'er-
whelming force,

Thou saidst, should so surround them
that resistance,

Were vain, and ere the dawn they
should go hence

Without one drop of bloodshed.

Zetho. Ay, my daughter,
Such was the promise.

Bard. And it will be kept.

[Bell strikes midnight.]

Hark, 'tis the hour! An overwhelming
force

[A red glare rising higher and higher
is seen through the windows of the
Senate-chamber. Confused noises
and shouts heard without.

Surrounds them, but no drop of blood
is shed.

All will go hence ere dawn.

Gycia. Oh, cruel man,
And most perfidious world! Oh, my
Asander!

To die thus and through me!

[A violent knocking is heard at the
door.

Enter THEOLORUS in great agitation,
and IRENE, who throws herself on her
knees, weeping. GYCIA falls swooning
in ZETHO's arms.

Zetho. Whence com'st thou, Theo-
dorus?

Theo. Straight, my lord,
From Gycia's palace.

Zetho. Say, what didst thou there?
And what of horror has befallen thee
That makes thine eyes stare thus?

Theo. Most noble Zetho,
When from the banquet scarce an hour
ago

I passed, came one who offered me a letter
And bade me read. 'Twas from this woman here,
My sister, and it told of some great peril
By fire, which she, within the prison locked,
Expected with the night. Wherefore I sped
With one I trusted, and did set a ladder
Against her casement, calling her by name,
And bidding her descend. But no voice came,
And all was dark and silent as the grave;
And when I called again, the Prince Asander,
From an adjacent casement looking, cried,
"I had forgot thy sister. Take her hence;
She should go free!" And then, at her own casement

[GYCIA revives and listens.]

Appearing, he came forth, and in his arms
A woman's senseless form. As they descended
And now were in mid-air, there came the sound
Of the bell striking midnight, and forth-with
In a moment, like a serpent winged with fire,
There rose from wall to wall a sheet of flame,
Which in one instant mounted to the roof
With forked red tongues. Then every casement seemed

With strange armed men; who leapt into the flames
And perished. Those who, maimed and burnt, escaped,
Ere they could gain their feet, a little band
Of citizens, who sprang from out the night,
Slew as they lay. The Prince, who bore my sister
Unhurt to ground, stood for a moment mute.
Then, seeing all was lost, he with a groan
Stabbed himself where we stood. I fear his hurt
Is mortal, since in vain I tried to staunch
The rushing blood; then bade them on a litter
Carry him hither gently. Here he comes.

Enter Citizens, bearing ASANDER on a litter, wounded.

Gycia. Oh, my love, thou art hurt!
Canst thou forgive me?
I thought to save thee and the rest. I knew not,
I did not know! Oh, God!
Asan. I do believe thee.
The fates have led our feet by luckless ways
Which only lead to death. I loved but thee.
I wished thy State no wrong, but I am dying.

Farewell! my love, farewell! [Dies.]

Gycia. Oh, my lost love!
[Throws herself on the body and kisses it passionately.]

Zetho. Poor souls! Mysterious are the ways of Heaven,

And these have suffered deeply in the fortune
That bound their lives together.

Bard. That dead man
Would have betrayed our State, and
thou dost pity !

So perish all the enemies of Cher-
son !

Cycia (*rising*). Nay, sir, be silent.
'Tis a coward's part
To vilify the dead. You, my Lord
Zetho,
I had your promise that you would hurt
one

Except the guilty only, and I thought
That to your word I might entrust my
life

And one more dear than mine ; but now
it seems

That in some coward and unreasoning
panic

This worthy Senator has moved his
colleagues—

Since cruelty is close akin to fear—
To break your faith to me, and to con-
fuse

The innocent and guilty, those who
led

And those who followed, in one dread-
ful death !

I pray you pardon me if, being a
woman,

Too rashly taking part in things of
State,

I have known nought of State-craft or
the wisdom

Which breaks a plighted word.

Zetho. Daughter, I would
Our promise had been kept, and I had
kept it

But that the safety of the State to
some ^

Seemed to demand its breach.

Cycia. Farewell, good Zetho,
And all who were my friends. I am
going hence ;

I can no longer stay. There lies my
love.

There flames my father's house. I go
far off,

A long, long journey. If you see me
not

In life again, I humbly pray the
State

May, if it think me worthy—for in-
deed

I have given it all—bury me, when I
die,

Within the city, in a fair white
tomb,

As did our Grecian forefathers of
old

For him who saved the State ; and, if
it may be,

Lay my love by my side.

Zetho and Sens. Daughter, we swear
That thou shalt have thy wish.

Cycia. I thank you, sirs.
Then, I may go. Kiss me, good

Theodorus :

I am no more a wife. I know thy
love,

And thank thee for it. For that wretch
whose lie

Has wrecked our life and love, I bless
the gods

That I am childless, lest my daughter
grew

As vile a thing as she ; and yet I know
not.

She loved him in some sort, poor wretch,
poor wretch !

But now I must be going. 'Tis past
midnight ;

[*Snatches a dagger from THEODO-
RUS'S side.*

I must go hence. I have lost my life
and love,

But I have saved the State.

[Stabs herself and falls on ASANDER'S body.]

Citizens of Cherson bursting in.

Cits. The State is saved! Long may our Cherson flourish!

The State is saved! Long live our Lady Gycia,

Who saved the State!

Gycia (rising a little). Yes, I have saved the State!

[Falls back dead.]

Citizens (without). Long live the Lady Gycia!

Curtain.

SONGS OF BRITAIN.

ON A THRUSH SINGING IN AUTUMN.

SWEET singer of the Spring, when the new world
Was filled with song and bloom, and the fresh year

Tripped, like a lamb playful and void of fear,

Through daisied grass and young leaves scarce unfurled,

Where is thy liquid voice
That all day would rejoice?

Where now thy sweet and homely call,
Which from gray dawn to evening's chilling fall

Would echo from 'thin copse and tasseled brake,

For homely duty tuned and love's sweet sake?

The spring-tide passed, high summer soon should come.

The woods grew thick, the meads a deeper hue;

The piggyer growths swelled, lush and tall;

The sharp scythes swept at daybreak through the dew,

Thou didst not heed at all,

Thy prodigal voice grew dumb;

No more with song mightst thou be-
guile,

She sitting on her speckled eggs the while,

Thy mate's long vigil at the slow days went,

Solacing her with lays of measureless content.

Nay, nay, thy voice was Duty's, nor would dare

Sing were Love fled, though still the world were fair;

The summer waxed and waned, the nights grew cold,

The sheep were thick within the wattled fold,

The woods began to moan,

Dumb wert thou and alone;

Yet now, when leaves are sere, thy ancient note

Comes low and halting from thy doubtful throat.

Oh, lonely loveless voice, what dost thou here
In the deep silence of the fading year?

Thus do I read the answer of thy song :
"I sang when winds blew chilly all day long ;
I sang because hope came and joy was near,
I sang a little while, I made good cheer ;
In summer's cloudless day
My music died away ;
But now the hope and glory of the year
Are dead and gone, a little while I sing
Songs of regret for days no longer here,
And touched with presage of the far-off Spring."

Is this the meaning of thy note, fair bird ?
Or do we read into thy simple brain
Echoes of thoughts which human hearts have stirred,
High-soaring joy and melancholy pain ?
Nay, nay, that lingering note
Belated from thy throat—
"Regret," is what it sings, "regret, regret !
The dear days pass, but are not wholly gone.
In praise of those I let my song go on ;
'Tis sweeter to remember than forget."

IN A COUNTRY CHURCH.

The organ peals, the people stand,
The white procession through the aisles,
As is our modern use, defiles
In ranks, which part on either hand.

They chant the psalms with resonant voice
These peasants of our Saxon Kent ;

With the old Hebrew king rejoice,
With him grow contrite and repent.

But when the pale priest, blandly cold,
White-winged above the eagle bents,
I lose the ancient words of old,
The monotone which still ascends.

For there the village school is set,
A row of shining faces bright,
Round cheeks by time unwrinkled yet,
Smooth heads, and hoyish collars white.

And through the row there runs a smile,
Like sunlight on a rippling sea—
A childish mirth, devoid of guile ;
What may the merry movement be ?

The teachers frown ; not far to seek
The wonder seems, for it is this :
A little scholar whose round check
A stain of gules appears to kiss.

For some low shaft of wintry sun
Strikes where Dame Dorothy of the Grange,
In long devotions never done,
Kneels on through centuries of change ;

And from her robe's unfading rose,
Athwart the fair heads ranged below,
A ruddy shaft at random goes,
And lights them with unwonted glow.

And straightway all the scene but these
Grows dim for me ; I heed no more
The preacher's smooth monotones,
The chants repeated o'er and o'er.

For I am borne on fancy's wings
Far from the Present to the Past ;

From those which pass to those which last,

The root and mystery of Things.

How many an old and vanished day,
Has gone, she kneeling there the while,
And watching, with her saintly smile,
The generations fade away.

The children came each Sunday there
To hear the self-same chant and hymn ;
The boys grew strong, the girls grew fair,
Their lives with fleeting years grew dim.

Their 'children's children' came and went,
She kneeling in the self-same prayer ;
They passed to withered age, and bent,
And left the Lady kneeling there.

They passed, and on the churchyard ground

No more their humble names are seen ;
Only upon the billowy mound
Yearly the untrodden grass grows green.

They grew, they waned through toil and strife,

From innocence to guilt and sin ;
They gained what prize was theirs to win,

They sank in shame the load of life.

And still the kneeling Lady calm
Throws gules on many a childish head,
And still the self-same prayers are said,
The self-same chant, the self-same psalm.

So had they been, before as yet,
Her far-off grandsons lived and died,
Ere long descent had nourished pride,
Before the first Plantagenet.

No change, unless some change there were

In simpler rite or grayer stone,
The self-same worship never done,
And for its very age grown fair.

Great God, the creatures of Thy hand,
Must they thus fail for ever still
Thy high behests to understand,
To seek and find Thy hidden will ?

Are Thy hands slow to succour then ?
And are Thy eyes, then, slow to see
The toiling, tempted race of men
Born into sin and misery ?

For nineteen centuries of Time,
Nay more, for dim unnumbered years,
Men's eyes have sought Thy face
sublime,
And turned uncomforterd, in tears.

For countless years unsullied youth
Has sunk through grosser mire of sense ;
And yet men cherish innocence !
And yet we are no nearer truth !

And not the less from age to age
Heavenward the unchanging suffrage rolls
From hearts inspired by holy rage,
And meek and uncomplaining souls,

Who see no cloud of doubt o'erspread
The far horizons of the sky,
But view with clear, unfailing eye
The mansions of the happy dead.

Oh, wonder ! oh, perplex'd thought !
Oh, interchange of good and ill !
In vain, by life's long pain untaught,
We strive to solve the riddle still.

In vain, so mixed the twofold skein,
That none the tangle may unwind ;
Where one the gate of Heaven may
find,
Another shrinks in hopeless pain.

So here the immemorial sum
Of simple reverence may breed
A finer worship than might come
For fruit of some severer creed.

Kneel, Lady, blazoned in thy place !
Through generations children kneel.
To know is weaker than to feel :
Though Truth seem far, we know her
face !

IN SPRING-TIDE.

This is the hour, the day,
The time, the season sweet.
Quick ! hasten, laggard feet,
Brook not delay ;
Love flies, youth passes, Maytide will
not last ;
Forth, forth, while yet 'tis time, before
the Spring is past.

The Summer's glories shine
From all her garden ground,
With lilies prankt around,
And roses fine ;
But the pink blooms of white upon the
bursting trees,
Primrose and violet sweet, what charm
has June like these ?

This is the time of song.
From many a joyous throat,
Mute all the dull year long,
Soar love's clear note ;

Summer is dumb, and faint with dust
and heat ;
This is the mirthful time when every
sound is sweet.

Fair day of large light,
Life's own appointed hour,
Young souls bud forth in white --
The world's a-flower ;
Thrill, youthful heart ; soar upward,
limpid voice ;
Blossoming time is come—rejoice, re-
joice, rejoice !

IN AUTUMN.

"DECAY, decay," the wildering west
winds cry,
"Decay, decay," the moaning woods
reply ;
The whole dead autumn landscape,
drear and chill,
Strikes the same chord of desolate sad-
ness still.
The drifting clouds, the floods a sullen
sea,
The dead leaves whirling from the
ruined tree,
The rain which falling soaks the sodden
way,
Proclaim the parting summer's swift
decay.
No song of bird, nor joyous sight or thing,
Which smooths the wintry forefront of
the spring ;
No violet lurking in its mossy bed,
Nor drifted snow-bloom bending over-
head,
Nor kingcups carpeting the meads with
gold,
Nor tall spiked orchids purpling all the
wold ;

But thin dull herbage which no more
may grow,
And dry reeds rustling as the chill
winds blow,
Bleak hillsides whence the huddled
flocks are fled,
And every speck of crested grass lies
dead.
"Decay, decay," the leafless woodlands
sigh,
The torpid earth, and all the blinded
sky,
And down the blurred moor, 'mid the
dying day,
An age-worn figure limps its weary way.

*A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S
DREAM.*

FAR in the west sinks down the Sun
On bars of violet and gold,
A soft breeze springs up fresh and
cold,
And darkness a transparent pall
Upon the waiting earth begins to fall,
And, decked with lucent gems of orbéd
light,
Walks forth the sable Night,
And once again the unfailing miracle is
done.

Ineffable, illimitable, immense,
Wonder of wonders, mystery of Space,
How can a finite vision meet thy face?
How shall not our poor eyes, dazzled
and dim,
Which see but thy vast circle's outward
rim,
Sink touched before thy gaze with im-
potence?
How shall our feeble voices dare to
hymn

Thy infinite glories—voices which were
best
To mortal loves and earth's poor joys
address?
How seek our earthly limits to trans-
cend,
And, without halt or pause,
Soaring beyond the limit of our laws,
Touch with a feeble hand on glories
without end?

Nay, great are these indeed
And infinite, but not so great as He
Their Maker who has formed them,
 who made me,
Who can in fancy leap, outward and
outward still
Beyond our System and its farthest star,
Beyond the greater Systems ranged afar,
To which our faintest suns are satellites,
 and no more—
Beyond, beyond, beyond, and strive to fill
The illimitable void which never sense
Nor thought alone may compass or
contain,
Then with a whirling brain
Return to the great Centre of all light,
Which doth control and bound the
Infinite,
And, looking to the undiscovered Sun,
Find all perplexity and longing done,
And am content to wonder and to adore.

This 'tis alone
Which doth console and soothe our
feeble thought,
Faint with the too great strain to com-
prehend
A Universe, which owns nor source nor
end.
Wherever through the boundless wastes
we stray,
For ever and for ever, some faint ray

Of the great central Sun, the hidden
Will,
Attends our wanderings still ;
Beyond the utmost limits of the sky,
Unseen, yet seen, the gaze of an Eternal
Eye.

No waste of systems lies around,
But a great Rule by which all things
are bound.

A changeless order circles sun with sun :
One great Will pulses through, and
makes them one.

System on system, vast or small,
One great Intelligence directs them all.
No longer from the endless maze we
shrink,
Like those who on some sea-cliff's
dreadful brink
Long to fling down into the empty air
And lose the pain of living, and to be
Sunk in the deep abysses of the sea ;
To lose the pain of living and the care,
Which dogs life like its shadow.

Nay, no dread
Have we who know a great Sun over-
head,
Which shines upon us always, unbeknown.
How should our eyes behold what is
too great
our imperfect state ?

How should our minds reach to it ;
how attain

With a too feeble brain,
To comprehend the Unbounded, the
Immense,
Incomprehensible by finite sense ?—
How through the Finite view the
Infinite,
Except by this clear Light ?

That is the light, indeed,
Which lights all souls which come upon
the earth.

That is the central Sun which on our
birth
Shone, and will shine upon us till the
end ;
A central Will which holds the worlds
in space ;
A Presence, though ~~she~~ look not on its
face,
Which sows a cosmic order through the
waste of things ;
A Being, all the beatings of whose wings
Are secular wastes of Time ; of whose
great soul
Creations are but moods, in whose vast
mind
Antinomies of Thought repose com-
bined,
Till those which seem to us as change-
less laws
Show but as phases of the Unchanging
Cause,
And we and all things fade and pass
away,
Lost in the effulgence of the Boundless
Day.

Let, then, unbounded Space,
Sown thick with worlds, encompass us ;
we care
No whit for it, nor shall our dazzled eyes
This waste of Worlds surprise,
Which have looked on its Maker, who
is more
Than all his work can be, but not the
less
Dwells in each human soul that looks
on Him
Albeit with vision dim ;
Whose constant Presence all our lives
confess,
Of whom we are a part, and closer far
Than is the furthest, most unmeasured
star,

Than are His great suns, big with
fruitful strife,
Seeing that we are a portion of His
Life,
Seeing that we hold His Essence—
some clear spark,
Which shines when all creation else
grows dark,
And are, however impotent and small,
One with the Will that made and
governs all.

* * * *

And now the night grows thin ;
A subtle air of newness seems to stir
Before the dawn, as if its harbinger
To prisoned souls within,
Proclaiming the near coming of the day.
Then Darkness, a great bird, with raven
wing,
Flies to the furthest west, and in her
stead
Young Day, an orient conqueror over-
head,
Looks down, and all that waste of
worlds has fled ;
And once again the Eternal, mystic
Birth
Is born upon the earth,
And once again the round of whole-
some life,
The doubt-dispelling stir and joyous
strife,
Chases the dreadful visions of the night,
Lost in the increasing light ;
And from the spheres a still voice seems
to say,
“ Awake, arise, adore, behold the Day !
It is enough to be, nor question why ;
It is enough to work our work and die ;
It is enough to feel and not to know.
Behold, the Dawn is breaking ; let us
go.”

AN ENGLISH IDYLL.

ONCE I remember, in a far-off June,
Leaving the studious cloister of my
youth,
Beside the young Thames' stream I laid
me down,
Wearied, upon a bank. 'Twas mid-
summer ;
The warm earth teemed with flowers ;
the kingcup's gold,
The perfumed clover, 'mid the crested
grass,
The plantains rearing high their flowery
crowns
Above the daisied coverts ; overhead,
The hawthorns, white and rosy, bent
with bloom,
The broad-spread chestnuts spiked
with frequent flowers,
And white gold-hearted lilies on the
stream ;
All these made joy within my heart,
and woke
The fair idyllic phantasies of Greece ;
And dreaming, well content with the
rich charm .
Of summer England, long I idly mused :
“ And were the deep-set vales of Thes-
saly
Or fair Olympian beech-groves more
than this ?
Or the Sicilian meads more rich in
flowers,
Where the lost goddess plucked the
aspodel ?
Or flowed the clear stream through a
lovelier shade
Where Dian bathed and rapt Acteon
saw ?
Or were they purer depths where Hydas
played

Till the nymphs drew him down? Ah,
 fairer dreams
Than our poor England holds! Grave,
 toil-worn land!
Poor aged mother of a graceless brood,
With shambling gait and limbs by
 labour bent!
What should she know of such?"

When straight I heard
A ripple of boyish mirth, and looking
 saw
Far off along the meads a gliding boat
Float noiselessly; lithe forms at either
 end—
The self-same forms which Phidias fixed
 of old—
With tall poles, pressed it forward,
 others lay
Reclined, and all had crowned their
 short smooth hair
With lilies from the stream, while one
 had shaped
Some hollow reed in semblance of a
 pipe,
Making a shrill faint sound—a joyous
 crew,
Clothed with the grace of innocent
 nakedness.
Then, while they yet were far, ere yet
 a sound
Of their poor rustic tones assailed the
 sense,
Or too great nearness marred the grace
 of form—

Poised sudden in a white row, side by
 side,
They plunged down headlong in the
 sweet warm tide.
Then, as I went, within myself I
 said,
"The young Apollo is not wholly
 fled,

Nor can long centuries of toil and care
Make youth less comely or the earth
 less fair.
To the world's ending Joy and Grace
 shall be.
I, too, have been to-day in Arcady."

ANIMA MUNDI.

OH great World-Spirit, wherefore art
 thou come?
We crave an answer, but thy voice is
 dumb.

Oh great World-Spirit, whither dost
 thou tend?
By what dark paths to what mysterious
 end?

We do not know, we cannot tell at
 all,
Only before thy onward march we
 fall.

* * * *

Nay, but before thy throne we fall, we
 kneel;
We crave not that thy face thou shouldest
 reveal;
We do not seek to know, only to feel.

We praise thee not in words our tongues
 can tell;
Though thy hand slay us, we will not
 rebel.

Whate'er thy will design for us, 'tis well.

Compute our lives with all thy bound-
 less past,
Project them on thy abyssal Future
 vast;
Only let all be merged in Thee at last.

IN PEMBROKESHIRE, 1886.

THROUGH crested grass I took my way
From my loved home. The sun was
high ;

The warm air slept the live-long day ;
No shadowy cloudlet veiled the sky.

The swift train swept with rhythmic
tune,

By endless pastures hurrying down,
White farm, lone chapel, castled town,
Then, fringed with weed, the salt lagune.

And last the land-locked haven blue,
Thin-sown with monstrous works of
war,

And on the sweet salt air I knew
Faint sounds of cheering from afar.

* * * * *
Strong arms and backs are bent, and
then

They draw us up the fluttering street ;
Behind, there comes the ordered beat
Of long-drawn files of marching men.

At last a halt ; a steep hillside
Set thick with toil-worn workers strong,
Grave faces stretching far and wide,
Fired with the hope to banish wrong.

Ah me ! how thin one voice appears,
To reach so many eager minds !
Nay, for it speaks to willing ears,
And what the hearer seeks he finds.

Unhappy Island of the West !
Thy brethren these in race and blood,
Not like thee tempted or oppress,
But filled with longing for thy good.

For just is manhood rude and strong
And generous the toiler's soul ;

When these the ship of State control,
Oppression shall not flourish long.

* * * * *

The crowds are gone, the hillside bare,
The last good-nights at length are said,
The harbour crossed again, the fair
Large star of eve hangs overhead.

The shades of tardy evening fall ;
Lights come in casements here and
there ;

Through dewy meads on the cool air
The wandering landrails hoarsely call.

The silent roads loom ghostly white ;
No veil of darkness hides the skies ;
A sunless dawn appears to rise
Upon the stilly charm'd night.

The day's hot concourse comes to seem
Far, far away ; the eager crowd,
The upturned gaze, the plaudits loud,
In the cool silence like a dream.

And oh, sweet odours, which the air
Of the calm summer midnight deep
Draws from the rose which lies asleep,
And bowery honeysuckles fair.

Oh, perfumed night ! Some tremulous
bird
From the thick hedgerows seems to
thrill.

No other sound but this is heard,
Save ringing horsehoofs, beating still.

Midnight is past ; there comes a gleam,
Precursor of the scarce-set sun.
Through gray streets hushed as in a
dream

We sweep, and the long day is done.

* * * * *

Men pass, but still shall Nature keep
Her night's cool calm, her dawn's
bright glow ;
Unseen her fragrant wild flowers creep,
Unmarked her midnight odours blow.

The long injustices of years
Shall pass ; the hapless Western Isle
Shall dry the age-long trace of tears,
And show instead a happy smile.

The wheels of Fate are swiftly borne
From point to point, from change to
change ;
What yesterday was new and strange ;
To-morrow scouts as old and worn.

I may forget the shouting crowd,
The sea of eyes which upward turn,
The kindling cheeks, the plaudits loud,
The sympathies which glow and burn.

Ay, all things change, but hardly those
Shall fade—the midnight calm of June,
The cool sweet airs, the night-bird's
tune,
The perfume of the sleeping rose.

EASTER-TIDE.

AWAKE, arise, oh Earth !
Thy hour has come at last ;
The winter's ruin past,
Spring comes to birth.
The virgin world with flowers again
grows bright,
And in the increasing light
Doth clothe herself with beauty ; once
again
A new creation issues with a stately
train.

Oh soul of man, arise
And keep thy Easter-tide,
White clothed as is a bride,
With calm pure eyes ;
When all things living else rejoice,
Not thine should be the voice
Alone to keep dull silence, mute, un-
heard,
Amid the joy that wakens every nest-
ing bird.

'Tis an old Spring of mirth
That bids our souls arise ;
No other moved the priests and
augurs wise
Upon the younger earth
When for the Passover the lamb was
slain,
Nor when they did complain
Of old time for the fair Adonis dead,
Greeting with tears of joy that dear
recovered head.

The same, yet not the same,
Joy fuller, deeper grief
Than in the old ages came
To wake belief.
The Spring our voices celebrate to-day
Is not the Spring which fades with
May,
Nor that renewal ours which shall be
done
Soon as our earth leans outward from
the averted sun.

Nor as theirs is our loss
Who wept the enamoured boy ;
Ours is a heavier cross,
A livelier joy,
Mixed in such sort with grief that one
is bred
From the other and by it nourished,

So that without the salutary pain
Were no place left for this triumphant
gain.

Great Law of Sacrifice
On which our lives are built,
That with our load of guilt
Soars to the skies,
I doubt if ever there was race of man
But based its life on such a mystic plan,
From old Prometheus' godlike treachery
To calm Osiris cold and sad Persephone.

Therefore, because the end
Of Winter comes and Death,
Our yearning souls ascend,
Faith quickeneth.
How should it be that man alone could
cease
When all things else increase?
Man, the first fruit of Time, Creation's
crown—
Shall he, while all is Spring, lie hope-
less and cast down?

Ay, always with the Spring
The waking comes again ;
Mixed tones of joy and pain
Our life-chords sing.
Sweet are the songs of autumn, sweet
of death,
And bitter sweet the first-drawn breath,
And sweet, though full of pain, the
mortal strife
When from Death's grasp we struggle
into Life.

That is the law of life—
Joy bought by sacrifice,
Pleasure for hopeless sighs,
And rest for strife.
The earth is no more, as it was at first,
By some strange spell accurst ;

A mystery has passed a mystery,
A boundless hope has bid new heavens
and earth to be.

Rise, happy Earth, arise,
Thy wintry darkness done,
To greet the new-risen sun
Oh soul, arise !
The joy which stirs the world let it
wake thee.
A symbol of thy risen life is born.
Awake, arise ! this is the very morn ;
A mystery has been ! a mystery !

GHOSTS.

SOMETIMES in some forsaken place,
Hid from the aspect of the sun,
We come on some forgotten trace
Of life and years long dead and done.

Some faded picture's doubtful truth,
Fixed in the springtime of our days,
Which through all change of men
portrays
The evanescent charm of youth—

The rounded cheek, the wealth of hair,
The bright young eye's unclouded
blue.
White head, wan face, were you thus fair ?
Sad eyes, and were these ever you ?

Changed, and yet still unchanged
through change,
The self-same lives for good or ill,
Thin ghosts with features known, yet
strange,
Of us who live and travail still.

Thin ghosts ! or is it we who fade
And are deceased, and keep no more

Than some thin unsubstantial shade
Of the young hopes and fears of yore?

Who knows what Life, or Death, or
Time

Are in themselves, or whither tend
The great world's footsteps slow,
sublime,

From what dim source—to what
hidden end?

Or if our growth be but decay,
Or if all Life must wax and grow,
Or if no change true Being know,
Though all things outward pass
away?

Ah! not in outward things we know
The chiefest work of Time and
Change;

But new faiths come, old thoughts
grown strange,
Old longings which no more may
glow.

Some time-stained sheaf of youthful
verse,
Some inarticulate yearning dumb,
Once dear, ere time and age had come
To turn the better to the worse.

In these the gazer starts to see
A self, not his, reflected most,
And asking, "Were these part of
me?"

Knows he has looked upon a ghost.

SONG.

LOVE took my life and thrilled it
Through all its strings,
Played round my mind and filled it
With sound of wings,
But to my heart he never came
To touch it with his golden flame.

Therefore it is that singing
I do rejoice,
Nor heed the slow years bringing
A harsher voice,
Because the songs which he has sung
Still leave the untouched singer young.

But whom in fuller fashion
The Master sways,
For him, swift winged with passion,
Fleets the brief days.
Betimes the enforced accents come,
And leave him ever after dumb.

FROM WILD WALES.

I.

LLYN Y MORWYNION.

By fair Festiniog, 'mid the Northern
Hills,
The vales are full of beauty, and the
heights,
Thin-set with mountain sheep, show
statelier far

Than in the tamer South. There the
stern round
Of labour rules,—a silent land, some-
times
Loud with the blast that buffets all the
hills
Whereon the workers toil, in quarries
hewn
Upon the terraced rock-sides. Tiert on
tier,

Above the giddy depths, they edge and
cling
Like flies to the sheer precipice as they
strike
The thin cleft slate. For solace of
their toil
Song comes to strengthen them, and
songlike verse
In the old Cymric measures, and the
dream
Of fame when all the listening thousands
round
Are ranged in Session, and the rapt
array
Expectant of the singer's soaring voice,
Or full quite rising thund'rous to the
skies,
The sheathed swords, and the sacred
Chair of oak,
Where sits the Bard. But most of all
they prize
Old memories of the Past, forgotten
feuds,
And battles long ago. One tale they
tell
Of a deep tarn upon the mountain side,
Llyn y Morwynion called, — "The
Maidens' Lake ;"
And thus it is the fair old story runs.

On Arvon once the men of Meirion,
Being alone, nor having hearth or home,
Swooped down when all her warriors
were ashield
Against the foemen. And they snatched
from them
The flower of all the maidens of the
race,
And to their mountain fastness far away
Bore them unchecked. There with
great care and love

They tended them, and in the captives'
hearts
The new observance slowly ousted all
The love of home and country, till they
stayed
Content, forgetting all their lives before,
Parents and kinsfolk, everything but
love.

But when the war was ended, and
their arms
Set free, the men of Arvon sent demand
That they should straight restore to
home and kin
The maidens they had rapt. Then
came great doubt
Upon the men of Meirion, knowing well
Their strength too weak to match the
Arvonian hosts
In unassisted war; heralds they sent
To Arvon asking peace, making amends
For what had been their fault. But the
others nursed
Deep anger in their hearts, and to their
words
Made only answer, " Give ye back un-
touched
Our daughters and eyr sisters, whom
your fraud
Has stolen from us, or prepare to
die."
Then they, taking deep counsel with
themselves,
Swore not for life itself would they
return
The women, only if themselves should
will
To leave them; and they made request
of them
That they might know their wish. But
when they sought
To question them, they answered with
one voice—

" We will not go ; for barren is the lot
 Of maidenhood, and cold the weary fate
 Of loveless lives, the household tasks
 whose weight
 Bears down the childless woman. Since
 we came
 We have known life in the full light of
 home.
 Say to our sires and brothers, that we
 stay
 Willing, and bid our young men that
 they wive
 From out some noble tribe ; for thus
 it is
 Our Cymric race grows strong. But do
 ye bid
 Our mothers comfort them, for they
 shall take
 Their grandsons on their knees ; for we
 are wed
 And cannot more return. Not Fate
 itself
 Can e'er recall the irrevocable Past."

But when the men of Arvon heard
 the host
 The herald brought, their souls were
 wroth in them
 Against the ravishers, whose cunning
 wiles
 Had worked such wrong. They called
 their warriors forth
 From every hill and dale, and marched
 in haste
 To Meirion. And they summoned
 them to yield,
 But they refused ; and so the fight was
 set
 For the morrow, on the margin of a
 mere
 Deep down within the circuit of the
 hills.

There, with the sun, within a close-
 set pass
 The men of Meirion stood, a scanty
 band,
 Waiting the approaching host. With
 grief and pain
 They left their loves, and swift, with
 breaking day,
 Marched with unfaltering steps, with-
 out a word,
 To the field of honour, as men go who
 know
 That all beside is lost. But as they
 stood,
 Ranged in stern silence, waiting for the
 fray,
 They saw a white procession thread the
 pass
 Behind, now seen, now lost, by flowery
 bends,
 Gorse gold and heather purple. At
 their head
 Blodeuwedd, she the flower in face and
 form
 By magic formed, by magic art fore-
 doomed
 To sin and suffer. Then again they
 knew
 The bitterness of death, and clasped
 once more
 The forms they loved, when by the lake
 the sun
 Lit the fierce light of countless marching
 spears.

Then with a last embrace the tearful
 throng
 Withdraw to where above the fastness
 rose
 A purple slope. No way the assailing
 host
 Might find to it while yet one stalwart
 arm

Of Meirion lived. Toward the lake it fell,

Till in a sheer, precipitous cliff it sank,
Its base in the unfathomable deep.

Now, while the maidens like a fleece
of cloud

Whitened the hill, or like a timid flock
From nearer danger shrinking, swift
there came

Along the grassy margin of the lake
The countless spears of Arvon. And
their sires

And brethren saw them, and great wrath
and joy

Fired them and urged them onward, till
they surged

And broke on Meirion. But her strong
sons stood

And flung them backward; and the
frightened throng

Of white-robed suppliants saw the deed,
and feared,

Hiding their eyes, hovering 'twixt hope
and fear,

Divided 'twixt their lovers and their
kin.

All day the battle raged, from morn
to eve;

All day the men of Arvon charged and
broke,

And charged again the little band which
stood

Unshaken in the pass, but hourly grew
Weaker and weaker still. But at the
last

The noise of battle ceased awhile; the
shouts,

The cries, grew silent. On the purple
hill

The kneeling women saw the Arvonian
host

Retreating with their dead, and rose to
go

With succour to their lovers. As they
gazed,

Sudden, as with a last despairing
strength

And a hoarse shout, again, a torrent of
steel,

The men of Arvon, by their own weight
pressed,

Burst on the scant defenders of the
pass;

Like some fierce surge which from the
storm-vest sea,

Through narrow inlets fenced by rocky
walls,

Lifts high its furious crest, and sweeps
in ruin

Within the rayless, haunted ocean caves,
Rocks, wreckage, and the corpses of
the dead.

And as the women, impotent to save,
With agonizing hands and streaming
eyes

Looked down upon the pass, they saw
their loves

Driven back, o'erwhelmed, surrounded,
flashing swords

And thrusting spears and broken shields,
and heard

The noise of desperate battle, then a
pause

And silence, as the last of Meirion's sons
Sank in his blood and the long fight
was done.

Then suddenly, ere yet the conquer-
ing host

Might climb to them, Blodeuwerdd,
standing clothed

In her unearthly beauty, faced the
throne

Of shrinking women. Not a word she spake.
 The sinking sun upon her snowy robe
 Shone with unearthly gold ; like some fair bird
 Leading the flock she showed. With one white arm
 She pointed to the dreadful pass where lay
 The thick-piled corpses, with the other signed
 Toward the sheer cliff, and to the lake beneath
 Motioned. One word she uttered - "Follow me,"
 And all who heard it knew and shared her mind.

Then looking to the heavens, she hurried down
 Through thyme and heather, chanting some wild hymn
 To the Immortal Gods ; and with her went
 The white-robed throng, and when they gained the verge,
 Without a pause, plunged through the empty air

Into the unfathomed depths, like some great flight
 Of white birds swooping from a sea-cliff down
 To ocean. The still waters leapt in foam ;
 One loud shriek only woke the air, and then
 Silence was over all, and night and death.

Still sometimes, when the dreaming peasants go
 By the lone mountain tarn at shut of day,
 The white clouds with the eve descending swift
 Down the steep hillside to the lake may seem
 The white-robed maidens falling, and the shriek
 Of night birds, fair Blodeuwedd and her train ;
 And fancy, by the ancient fable fed,
 Turns from the duller Present's dust and glare
 To the enchanted twilights of the Past

II.

THE PHYSICIANS OF MYDDFAI.

FAR, far away in wick Wales, by the shore of the boundless Atlantic,
 Where the cloud-capt peaks of the North are dwarfed to the hills of the South,
 And through the long vale to the sea, the full-fed, devious Towy
 Turns and returns on itself, like the coils of a silvery snake,
 A grey town sits up aloft on the bank of the clear, flowing river,
 As it has sat since the days when the Roman was first in the land.
 A town, with a high ruined castle and walls mantled over with ivy,
 With church towers square and strong and narrow irregular streets,
 And, frequent in street and lane, many-windowed high-shouldered chapels,

Whence all the still Sabbath ascend loud preaching and passionate prayer,
Such violent wrestling with sin, that the dogs on the pavement deserted
Wake with a growl from their dreams at the sound of the querulous voice,
And the gay youths, released from the counter and bound for the seaside or
hillside,

Start as they wake on their way echoes of undevout feet,
And here and there a rude square, with statues of popular heroes,
A long quay with scarcely a ship, and a hoary bridge spanning the stream,
The stream which struggles in June by the shallows where children are swimming,
The furious flood which at Yule roars seaward, resistless along,
Though the white steam ribbons float by it, forlorn it seems, almost forsaken.
All the day long in the week the dumb streets are hushed in repose,
But on market or fair day there comes a throng of Welsh-speaking peasants
From many a lonely farm in the folds of the rain-beaten hills,
And the long streets are filled with the high-pitched speech of the chattering
Cymry,
With a steeple-crowned hat, here and there, and the red cloaks which daunted
the French.
Scarce in Keltic Brittany's self, or in homely Teutonic Silesia,
So foreign a crowd may you see as in this far corner of Wales.

Above the grey old town, at the mouth of the exquisite valley,
Rises a quaint village church deep in o'ershadowing yews ;
On a round-topped hill it stands, looking down on the silvery river
And the smooth meadows enced by tall elm, and the black kine, like flies on
the green.
Below, 'midst its smooth-pleached lawns, stands the many-roofed Anglican
palace,
And aloft from its straight-ridged pines, the enchanter's summit ascends.
Thence along the upward vale, by fold upon fold of the river,
By park and by tower, at last the far-off mountain chains soar,
Flecked with shadow and sunshine which float on the side of the desolate
moorland,
And the whole still landscape lies bathed in a haze of ineffable peace.

There, where the mountains ascend by the white little town of Llandovery,
Steeply the circular side of the crater-like summit dips down.
A blue lake lies beneath, deep set in the desolate hollow,
Where scarcely a breath of air ruffles in summer its face.
The Van Lake 'tis called of old time, like the Van Lake of distant Armenia.
Hardly a wayfarer's foot comes near, or a wayfarer's eye.
But far, far below are seen the white homesteads, dotting the valley,
And to-day, as of old, still silence and solitude everywhere reign.

There, as in crowded towns, life is real and full of striving ;
 There, too, is life fulfilled of small hopes and of trivial fears.
 There, too, the finger of fate, unavoidable, pitiless, awful,
 Points with unfaltering aim, to the road which our footsteps shall tread.
 Love is among them, and hate, low desires and high aspirations,
 Fortune is blind there as here, the good mourn, and the wicked rejoice.
 Only there the sense of the Past, the romantic, the mystical lingers,
 Touched with a glamour and charm, denied to the turmoil of towns.
 The light which never has been, still shines on those hillsides secluded,
 Illuming with rays, not of earth, those homely and labouring lives.
 Here is a tale which is cherished to-day through that far-withdrawn valley,
 Half believed by the aged folk still, but year by year fading away.

Long, long ago, when our Princes were falling in fight with the Norman,
 And all our wild Wales lay o'erwhelmed by a torrent of rapine and blood,
 A brave peasant woman strove here with hard fate, though her husband had
 fallen,
 Strove for her only boy, who was rising to manhood apace.
 So close was the bond which bound widowed mother and dutiful stripling,
 None of Myddfai's daughters touched the young man's self-contained heart.
 A kindly fortune smiled on the toil of the desolate woman,
 Their flocks and their herds increased on the meads of the bountiful vale,
 So quickly their numbers grew, that from the shorn valley he drove them
 To fresh fields and pastures new on the side of the mystical hills.

Morning and evening he watched on the lonely side of the hollow,
 While the grey kine wandered at will on the hill's half-precipitous steep.
 Ost on the lake's still surface, no breath came to ruffle the mirror,
 Nor sound, save the boulders rolled downward, that stirred for a moment its
 calm.
 All the day long he mused, wrapt in thought on the desolate hillside,
 All day the sure-footed kine cropt the sweet grass of the hills.
 Thoughts came to him, innocent thoughts of a chaste youth guileless of error,
 Thoughts of a maiden as fair as a young man's passionate dream.

Fair were the maidens of Myddfai, but fairer his far-off ideal,
 Which touched with a glamour of gold the day-dreams of innocent youth.
 All the day long he dreamt on, gazing down on the blue of the waters,
 Till theplash of the trout, as they rose, seemed the oar of some mystical bark ;
 All the day long he mused, and with evening, by moonlight or starlight,
 Dreaming he wound his slow way with his kine to the valley below,
 Dreaming through fair summer days and the long dark evenings of winter
 The sweet shy dreams of a youth fulfilled of a virginal shame.

In secret his mother noted the dreams which her son was dreaming,
 Marking the far-off look in the absent eyes of the boy.
 Pain would she rouse him with jests and bantering words, but the stripling
 Smiled a soft smile in reply, then turned to his musings again.

When he had spent many days in happy and undisturbed dreaming,
 One day, as the setting sun threw beams of bright gold on the lake,
 Lo ! a great marvel and wonder, a herd of phantom-like oxen
 Seemed to his dazzled eyes to emerge from the mystical depths.
 White they were, brindled and white, heavy dewlapped, lords of the meadows,
 Driven as it seemed by a swan from the lake's far centre along.
 Nearer and nearer they drew, till the swan to his yearning vision
 Grew to a maiden as fair as the fanciful Fair of his dreams.
 Gold were her locks and blue her eyes as the clear sky of autumn,
 White was her bosom and red the half-opened rose of her mouth.
 Nearey and nearer she came, till the youth, with ineffable longing,
 Stretched forth his passionate arms to fold to his bosom the Fair,
 Stretched forth, and offered her bread in humble token of friendship :
 But the Fair smiled a sweet smile, smiled and eluded his grasp.
 Then, as he stood on the brink, in mute and motionless yearning,
 Lo ! with a silvery laugh, the fair vision faded away.

Oftentimes thus on the brink he stood afterwards waiting the maiden,
 Often she came not at all, or a strong wind ruffled the deep.
 Twice again did she come, and he held forth bread for her taking.
 Still, with a silvery laugh, refusing, she faded away.

Careworn the young man grew, and spent with unsatisfied yearnings,
 Nor recked though the kine unheeded strayed on the perilous steeps.
 Never again the lake maiden came by sunlight or moonlight,
 Till his fond hope too long deferred, wasted him body and soul.
 All his sleepless nights were filled with the pitiless vision :
 All the musing days, a slow fire burned in his breast ;
 Half ashamed, he told his mother his pain, and the pitying woman
 Sighed that her son should thus pine, but knew not to succour his grief.
 Marking his cheeks' red flush, she feared lest her son might be taken,
 Till she found no heart for her toil, and her substance wasted away.

There, when Midsummer Eve was come, the magical season,
 The young man wandered in vain on the brink of the mystical lake ;
 There, when All-Hallow-tide came, he wandered, if only the maiden
 Might rise on his longing eyes ; but never at all did she come.
 At last, on the year's last night, he, stealthily rising at midnight,

To the cold lake side went, hopeless, with faltering feet.
 The full moon bathed in silver steep hillside and slumbering waters.
 By the cold lake side he paused, with something of half-renewed hope,
 When, borne on the face of the waters, behold by the reeds of the lake side
 Floating a magical disc of milk-white mystical bread.
 Swift, yet with reverence too, as one taking the Host at the altar,
 Kneeling, the youth partook of the strange ineffable food,
 Till ere the weird rite was ended, again a marvellous portent
 Greeted his longing eyes, and stayed the quick throb of his heart,
 For lo ! on the silvery path of the moon on the undisturbed waters,
 The herd that he saw once before came slowly gliding to land,
 And beyond them—oh, vision of bliss ! —the maid of his dreams, approaching,
 Plying a light golden oar, in a swift-moving shalllop of gold.
 Nearer she came and more near, while his heart stood still with emotion,
 Fearing the glorious dream should once again vanish away ;
 Nearer and nearer she came, and leaped from the skiff to the lake side,
 And lay, in unearthly beauty, willingly clasped in his arms.

When he found tongue to speak, "Oh, my love, at last have I found thee !
 Though not of earth is thy race, oh, stoop to my virginial love.
 Oh, it is long I have loved thee, and though I know thee immortal,
 Tarry awhile, fair vision, leave me not loveless again !
 Come from thy mountain heights, come from thy dwelling deep down in the waters.
 Pity me ere I die who can only live in thy love."
 Then the maid, "Rhiwallon, I love thee ; long time have I tried thy devotion,
 Long have I pitied thy vigils spent in these desolate hills ;
 Always have I been near thee, unseen have I witnessed thy yearnings,
 Only the mystical bread was wanting to join us in one.
 Now we are one heart and soul, I will live with thee always, and love thee."
 And together the mystical bread they ate, and their lives were made one.

Then said the maiden, "Oh, mortal ! this warning I needs must give thee.
 Thy wife will I be all thy days—thy dear wife, faithful and true,
 Nourish thy children, obey thee in all things, be dutiful always,
 Fill all thy fields with the dowry thou seest of full-uddered kine,
 Love thee and cherish thee always, and plenish thy barn with good harvests,
 Long as the will of high Heaven gives thee to live upon earth.
 Only, this ordinance holds if a maid of the race of immortals
 Wed with a mortal on earth, leaving her higher estate,
 If he should strike her three times, she and hers, her bonds being loosened,
 Whether she will it or not, return to her kindred again."
 Careless the fond youth heard, and smothered her warning with kisses,
 And down through the joyous New Year he went with his bride to their home,

Long in great welfare they lived, knit together in happy wedlock ;
 Never a cloud arose on the tranquil sky of their home,
 The great herds thrrove and increased more than all the herds of the valley,
 The robbers who harried the vale left them untouched and in peace.
 Never was husband more fond of the wife of his boyish affection,
 Never was wife more sweet, or fuller of dutiful love.
 The good mother died full of years, and calling her daughter blessed.
 Children were born of their love, more than others prudent and fair.
 Their strong sons were good and discreet, laborious, eager for knowledge,
 Scarcely the Abbot himself equalled their learning, 'twas said ;
 Fair were the daughters and good, sweet, dutiful maidens, and prudent ;
 Nowhere in all our wild Wales was a race so gracious and fair.

And yet, when their wedlock was new, that had happened which now was forgotten.
 The youth and his bride were bidden one day to a christening feast.
 The young husband hastened to go ; but the wife, with half-hid reluctance,
 Loitered till almost too late to traverse the difficult hills.
 Many a pretext she urged, not loving the rites of religion,
 Holding some primitive faith, old as the hills and the sea,
 Till, when the hour was grown late, Rhiwallon in playful impatience,
 Seeking his wife up and down, found her reluctant at last.
 "Come," said he, "wife, it is time," and smilingly on her fair shoulder
 Tapped with his empty glove, and she rose and obeyed with a sigh.
 "Dearest, remember," she said, "my warning when first we were wedded ;
 Once that has been which should not. Remember, be careful, my heart !"
 Then to the christening she went, nor shrank from the priest nor the water,
 Only a vague disquietude long time troubled their souls.

Also long years after this, when the past was wellnigh forgotten,
 They were bidden together again to a gay marriage feast in the vale ;
 Not now was the wife unwilling, but ready to go and eager.
 In deep contentment the pair went forth to the innocent feast.
 Duly the marriage sped, the priest said his mystical office,
 No word the goodwife spake, as she knelt in her place by her lord ;
 But when the marriage was done, and they ate at the jovial bride-feast,
 Sudden the goodman perceived his wife in a passion of tears :
 Sobbing, she sat by his side inconsolable loudly lamenting,
 Till all the gay company rose with dismay from the midst of their mirth.
 Always her prescient soul saw the future hidden from mortals,
 The grief that should come of that day, the dreadful problems of life,
 The lives that from that day's mirth should arise—to what fate predestined ?
 The long generations of men foredoomed to sorrow alone.

Knowing the fever of life and its ending, the mystical woman
 Held not her peace, but burst forth in a passion of weeping and pain ;
 But Rhiwallon, knowing not all, but filled with distress for the bridefolk,
 Turned to her, and bidding her cease, touched lightly her arm in reproof.
 In one moment she ceased from her wailing, and scarcely regarding her goodman,
 "Love," she said, "that was the second time ; only one other remains."

All these things had they almost forgot, living happy in wedlock,
 Watching their children grow to strong manhood and womanhood fair ;
 Smoothly their lives flowed along in unbroken weal and affection,
 As their devious Towy, which wound through cornland and mead to the sea.
 Not a thought had the goodman of death, or of parting, than death more bitter ;
 But the goodwife, loving her lord, watched with solicitous thought.
 Scarce from her prescient mind had faded the danger which pressed them,
 The bliss which a careless touch might turn in a moment to pain ;
 Here on the kindly earth she had made her choice and her dwelling,
 Here she would willingly live with her husband, and with him would die.
 Far off her birthland appeared, cold and lifeless the mystical waters ;
 Better to sleep in the meads than to pass that cold portal again.
 Love's light beaming warm on her life, in her veins the warm human life-blood
 Filled with new longings a heart which was only half human before.
 "What would life profit her now to those ice-cold abysses returning ?
 Better to die upon earth by the fate which awaiteth us all."
 Thus the goodwife, half human in heart, mused in silence, her children around
 her,
 Filled with a deep boding sense of the terrible nearness of fate.

Last it befell once again that the pair were bidden together
 (Christening for youth, for full age bride-feasts, for old age the grave),
 To a solemn burial they went ; 'twas a friend of their youth who was taken.
 All the desolate house was hushed in mourning and tears,
 But before the dead was borne forth, the strange heart of the mystical woman,
 Long keeping silence with pain, broke out at last into mirth.
 Was it because she knew that the burden of living is heavy,
 From what load of misery here the dead are delivered by death ?
 Or was it because she knew of her old primeval religion
 How much higher than human life is the lot of the just who are dead ?
 Or was it her soul had beheld the restitution of all things,
 And felt a great hope and joy which lightened the shadow of death ?
 Who shall tell ? but her elfin nature broke forth in immoderate laughter,
 Piercing the mourners' hearts, as they stood round the bier of the dead.
 Long time the goodman was mute, till at last keen shame overcame him,
 No more could he suffer unmoved that meaningless laughter and joy.

"Hush, hush! wife," he said, "you forget," and touched her again on the shoulder.
 "For the ending of troubles I laughed," she replied, and grew grave and was still.

Then with a sob and a sigh the goodwife, looking behind her,
 Rose from her place by her lord and swiftly passed forth by the door,
 "Farewell," she said, "oh my love; thou hast struck me the thiril and the last
 time.

Fate 'tis that parteth us—Fate! Farewell! I shall see thee no more."
 So strange she showed and so weird that the goodman dared not detain her.
 Seeing his goodwife no more, and knowing the finger of Fate;
 Seeing his goodwife no more, no longer the well-beloved features,
 The hair that was silvered by time, the dim eyes with their motherly care;
 But the radiant figure once more, golden-haired, azure-eyed, and immortal,
 That at midnight arose, long ago, from the depths of the mystical lake.
 None offered to stay her course, but she glided alone, unattended,
 Splendid in radiant youth, up the lonely, precipitous hills.
 Not to her home or her children returned, nor tarried a moment;
 Straight to the hillside she went, weeping and blinded with tears,
 And as she passed by the fields where her magical cattle were grazing,
 Always she caroled aloud a strange and mystical song.

"Come hither, Brindle!" she sang; "come, White Spot! bring your calves
 with you!
 Come thou, White Lord of the Herd, who wert born in the House of the King!
 Come, we must go to our home! and ye, yoked patient-eyed oxen,
 Come with me, come with the rest; it is time, come all of ye home!"

The great herds heard the call, and streamed in an endless procession;
 The gray oxen burst from the furrow, leaving the ploughshare behind.
 Up the rough hillside they climbed behind her, obeying her mandate,
 Till they showed to the gazers below like a white cloud mounting the steep.
 Up the steep hillside they sped to the lake, and the wondering peasants
 Heard a clear voice from the hill, "Deuwch adre! Deuwch adre! Come home!"

Never again upon earth had Rhiwallon sight of his helpmeet,
 Never again did he seek his love on the lake and the hills;
 Wayworn and weary he grew, nor might dreams of beauty allure him.
 The face that he loved and lost was aged, with silvery hair;
 But the beautiful being who went from her seat at the fateful banquet—
 What was her youth to his age, or his age to her radiant youth?
 What if his eyes once again should perceive the bright vision of old time,
 Old as he was, and changed from the hopeful dreams of the boy?
 Nay, it would kill him to see the black deep which had taken his life's love.
 Never again did he gaze on its hateful magical face.

But the strong sons, when they knew their mother was gone from among them—
 Gone without even a word, to strange death or to mystical life—
 Evening by evening would climb the lonely, precipitous hill-side,
 Yearning if haply their eyes might see the loved features again.
 Long, long vigils they spent in vain, nor ever the vision
 Came, any more than it comes to all children orphaned on earth,
 Till one night, when all hope was dead, they burst into passionate weeping.
 "Mother, thy children," they said, "call thee, and call thee in vain.
 Break through the fetters of Fate, take again thy womanly nature;
 Come to us, mother, once more, let us see thee and hear thee again."
 And lo! as they looked, in the moonlight a shining, beautiful figure
 Came in a shallop of gold, on the silvery path of the moon.
 Nearer and nearer it came; but lo! as they gazed in fond yearning,
 Not as their mother it seemed, but a youthful, fairy-like form.
 Gold were her locks and blue her eyes, as the clear sky of autumn.
 Bitterly weeping, they turned from the lake side with sinking young hearts—
 Turned from the lake side, and went, side by side, down the hill paths in silence,
 Silent, with never a word, till they came within sight of their home.
 Then close behind them they heard a sweet voice, which called to them softly,
 And, turning round quickly, they saw the mother they loved and had lost.

"Listen, dear sons," she said. "With what spells you have drawn me ye
 know not.
 No power but motherly love can bring an immortal to earth,
 No other love can avail to reknit the bonds that are broken;
 Only her child's strong cry calls back a mother again.
 Give me your hands and kiss me; for see, I am old as you knew me,
 The youth of those cold depths changed for the kindlier ripeness of earth.
 Lo, I am now as I was, when an earthly love kept me among you,
 Only I view all things with a clearer and perfecter sight.
 Yours, dear sons, it must be to succour your suffering brothers.
 Bound to a body which age and disease waste quickly away,
 Healers your race shall be, knowing many a secret of Nature,
 And all the virtues of herbs, which are sent for the comfort of man.
 When ye come to these lonely heights, I will meet you and speak with you always,
 Teaching the secrets of life, which are hid from the great ones of earth.
 Come to me often, dear sons; I shall see you afar, and will meet you,
 Walk with you always, discourse with you, teach you to live and be wise.
 Say to my girls that they cherish their father and comfort him always;
 Bid them remember their mother, who loves as she loved them on earth.
 And now, farewell, dear hearts, since to earth your yearnings have brought me.
 While you live I will always be with you. Be wise, then, my children, and
 good."

Often at evening, the youths would climb to the mystical lake side,
 Culling the simples that grew on the slopes of the desolate hills—
 “Pant y Meddygon,” men called it, “The dingle of the Physicians”—
 And with them, wherever they went, their mother invisible came,
 Teaching them all that ‘tis lawful to know of the secrets of Nature
 And the powers of healing that seem to be God’s own prerogative gift.
 Such was the knowledge they took from their loving, mystical mother,
 In all our wide Britain was found no leech so skilful as they.
 All the sick of the country around flocked to them to be healed by their cunning :
 Broad lands in Myddfai and rank the Lord Rhys gave for their skill.
 Often, for years and for years, men might see the gentle Physicians
 Culling the herbs on the hills, to battle with death and with pain.
 From manhood to age they passed, still learning and perfecting knowledge,
 Mounting the hillside at last with slower and tottering steps ;
 And often a shepherd would tell of a clear voice which spoke with them always,
 And oft of a shadowy form, guiding their faltering feet.

So they passed, and were laid in the grave, obeying the mandate of Nature,
 Wrapt round in the sweet, cold earth by the kindly general law.
 Their sons and their sons’ sons came, increasing the lore of their fathers ;
 But no kindly Presence came to walk with them over the hills.
 Slowly, through ages of Time, as the fierce glare of knowledge assails it,
 Hardly the fair tale can live in the light of our commoner day ;
 But still through the country side runs the same of the gentle Physicians.
 The grove of Physician Evan is known in Myddfai to-day.
 “Llwyn Ifan Feddyg,” it runs, and another—“Llwyn Meredydd Feddyg.”
 Thus, in the old, old tongue, the old, old legend survives.
 The skill, which through centuries lightened the burden of suffering mortals,
 Lacked not memorials still in the hearts of the aged and sick ;
 Nay, in fair Brecknock itself, in the church of far-off Llandefallte,
 Only a century since, were their praises engraved on their tombs.
 Where is the sceptic would doubt the tale of the mystical mother,
 If, five centuries after she went, the Meddygon of Myddfai could heal ?
 Or if living men in their youth, on the first fair Sabbath of August,
 Have thronged from the fair town below to the banks of the mystical lake,
 Hoping to see its still surface boil sudden, the white herds emerging,
 And the golden shalllop and oar, and the beautiful Presence of old—
 Hoping, but hoping in vain, yet in simple belief unshaken,
 For had they not witnessed her cures of the weak, and the halt, and the blind ?

But to-day, with its broader light, floats these beautiful stories romantic.
 No more these fair visions unearthly are seen on the lakes and the hills.
 From knowledge alone is strength ; but ‘tis oh for the fair dreams of old time,

The genius which clothed deep truths in fanciful vestures and fair !
 Not more in the legends of Hellas, than these fair myths of the Cymry,
 Are grave truths and precious set in a beautiful framework of song.
 Let them be ; they are fair, they are fine, though they wear not their pearl on
 their foreheads.

Let them be ; they are flowers of our Race, and as is the flower is the fruit.
 Not in the savage tales of the Norseman the Cymry delighted.—
 Tales of blood-stained feasts and rude gods, consumed in a furnace of fire—
 But this gentle Physician's story of ruth for suffering mortals,
 Mild wisdom, o'ermastering Fate, young passion, and motherly love.
 Not wholly your tale shall perish, oh kindly Physicians of Myddfai,
 Nor the charm of that mystical soul which was born of and lost in the deep ;
 Not wholly, while speech is mine, though the low rays of knowledge shall flout you,
 And in its broad, pitiless glare you dwindle and vanish away.

But still, as I linger and gaze, perusing the exquisite valley,
 Upward by castle and peak, downward by river and town,
 Whether from wooded Cystanog, or yew-shaded graves of Llangunnor,
 Closing the upward gaze, far off lies the mystical steep.
 Many fair scenes lie between us—gray Dryslwyn's verdant hillock,
 Grongar long precious to verse, Dynevor's caatle and wood,
 High perched on its precipice-crags the ruins of grim Cerrigcennen,
 Or the green vale higher than these, where the fair Towy winds and unwinds.
 However the gaze ascends, the dark precipice closes the landscape,
 Beneath whose difficult steep lies the haunted abys of the lake.
 Always the story comes back as I gaze, the beautiful legend
 Which here for long ages of time the wondering peasants believed.
 In yonder churchyard lie those, who ere they were freed from the body,
 Grew strong through their poor brief lives by the gift of the Fair of the lake ;
 And, as the sun moves to the West and defines the deep shades of the hollow,
 I am fired by the fair old tale, till almost I take it for true.

III.

THE CURSE OF PANTANNAS.

'Mid fair Glamorgan's hills the close-
 set vales
 Teem with men's works and toil. The
 great shafts rise,
 Belching forth smoke and fire ; the
 labouring beams

Of the great engines slowly lift and
 pause
 And fall with rhythmic beat. The
 labouring town
 Creeps down the winding valley ; the
 poor streets
 Are deep in inky dust. There comes
 no sound
 But children's clamour or the sob or
 shriek

Of the quick-throbbing steam. The men are sunk
 Beneath the earth, or sleeping weary sleep.
 Toil, toil, or rest from toil, that is the sum
 Of those unnumbered lives. Yet are they filled
 With joys and griefs as are the great on earth,
 And through the teeming village love and toil
 Are everywhere ; the poor lives come to birth,
 Grow ripe and are deceased, but never more
 The face of nature is as 'twas at first.

But on the unsenced hillsides, far above,
 The sounds, the dust, the smoke, come not at all.
 Still solitude is there, where seldom foot
 Of weary toil intrudes ; the keen cool air
 Blows fresh and still untainted on the hills ;
 Awhile the dark pines climb aloft, then stay,
 Like a tired traveller, and naught remains
 But short sweet grass and thyme and nibbling sheep,
 And mountain torrents hid in deep ravines,
 While the swift gaze ranges from vale to vale
 Masked by its veil of smoke. And, when 'tis night,
 Immense Aurocas, glaring o'er the sky,
 Mark where amid the folded hillsides lies

The City of the Martyr. Here, where still
 The Cymric lure, the Cymric speech survive,
 The half-forgotten fables of old time,
 Of gnome and fairy, Norian undisturbed
 Amid the noon tide glare of common day,
 And one there is reaped from this very spot
 And breathing of the race, and it is this :—

Long, long ago, the fair-folk on the earth
 Were frequent, and their rings upon the meads
 Showed green wherever virgin pastures were,
 And o'er the leas their elfin music thrilled
 Whether of oaten pipe or silvery flute,
 While the young moon was rising on the hills,
 And the gay elves footed it merrily
 Upon the dry smooth turf. So oft they came,
 Summer and winter, on his sweet short grass,
 That one grave churl who at Pantannas dwelt,
 Hating the senseless revel and the race,
 In anger to the witch who dwelt hard by
 Revealed his case, demanding if she knew
 Some potent charm wherewith to free his life
 From this insensate snirth of godless souls.

Then she, knowing his wish and all
the lore
Of the forbidden books, counselled him
thus :—

" Wherever on thy pastures shows a
ring
Which tells of elfin revelry by night,
Yoke thy strong oxen, driving straight
through them
Thy ploughs, till all lie fallow. Sow
them thick
With kindly corn fit for the use of
man,
So, when the harvest comes, this tricksy
folk,
That hates the newer race of mortal
men
And that which gives them food, will
come no more,
For chiefly the unsullied meads they
love
Where never ploughshare came since
the old time
Ere men were first on earth. So shalt
thou gain
Great harvests for thy wealth, and shalt
disperse
This cursed people, and shalt reap white
wheat
Till all thy barns o'erflow, and thou
indeed
Art lord of thy own lands far more than
now.
Do thou this thing, and Fortune shall
be thine,
And peace and the full mastery of thy
own."

So did the churl. He drove his iron
ploughs
Through the inviolate meads, and
straight the sounds

Of dance and song grew silent. Never
more
Came those strange elfin rings upon
his fields,
Nor any traveller passing saw a glimpse
Of those quick-tripping feet; but far
away
The fair-folk turned, where yet no cruel
share
Was sent to kill the greensward. Spring-
tide came:
The fields grew splendid with the
wheat's bright green,
When, one day as the sun had kissed
the hills,
The grave churl, turning homeward,
saw a form
Upon his path which threatened him,
and said,
" Daw dial ! " " Vengeance comes ! "
And in the night,
When all was still, there came a noise
which shook
The house as though 'twould fall, and
the same voice,
" Daw dial ! " And when now 'twas
harvest-tide
And the great barns stood open for the
grain,
One night, no ear nor straw was in the
fields,
Only black ashes, and the same strange
form
Met him again, pointing a sword at
him,
And in the same weird accents, " It
begins,"
" Nid yw ond dechren."

Then the churl, afraid,
Begged for forgiveness, willing that the
fields
Should turn to meads again, wherpon
the sprite

Promised at last that he would pray
his king

Forgiveness of the fault, and come
again

On the third day, bringing his lord's
behest. *

Now, when the third day came, the
churl went forth
Through his burnt fields, and there
again the elf

Waited, and to the other made report,
"The king's word is for aye unchanged-
able,

And vengeance must be done. Still,
- since thy fault

Thou dost repent, and hast atoned in
part,

Therefore, not in thy time, nor of thy
sons,

Shall the curse fall, but, poised on
high, await

Thy distant seed." Then he, as one
who hears

Repeive from death, o'erjoyed sent forth
his hinds

To turn the corn to pasture. Once
again

The dark green rings grew frequent on
the grass,

The gay elves danced, the old melodious
sounds

Of song and music gladdened all the
fields,

And he grew rich and passed in peace-
ful age,

And his sons followed him, and slept in
peace.

But still, when fourscore years or
more had fled,

The dread voice came at times, repeat-
ing still

The self-same threat, "Daw dial!"
"Vengeance comes!"

Oft heard across the years; but since
long use

Obscures the sense, so, when this
warning came

And no harm followed it, the wealthy
squire

Who held Pantannas then, took little
heed

Of half-forgotten memories. His young
son

Rhydderch was come to manhood, and
would wed

Gwen, daughter of Penraig, and both
their houses,

Were fain of it. A noble pair were
they,

In fitted years, and rank, and mutual
troth.

No cloud came on the sky of their
young love,

But all men praised the bridegroom's
 gallant port

And the bride's sweetness, and they
made a feast

At gray Pantannas esq the marriage day,
Whereto the fair girl Gwen and all her
kin

Were bidden. It was the wintry
joyous time

Of Yule-tide and the birth-time of the
Lord,

When all hearts, for the sacred season
glad,

Make merry in the fading of the year.

With mirth had sped the feast; all,
round the hearth

Were seated, Gwen and Rhydderch
side by side.

Careless they winged the hours with
tale and song.

The night was still, there came no breath of sound,
Only without the loud unceasing fall
Of the full river plunging down the rocks,
Only within the noise of mirth and song.

Then suddenly they seemed to hear a voice
Above the roaring stream. A silence fell
On all the joyous group. Not as the voice
So often heard it came, but seemed to wail
Some unremembered word. The maiden clung
Close to her lover for a while, and then
The jovial hearth, the jest, the tale,
the song,
Chased all their fears, and all was as before.
No sound without but the unceasing noise
Of the full river plunging down the rocks.

Then, swift again, above the sounds of mirth,
Above the river roaring through the rocks,
A clear voice, dreadful, pealed, "The Time is come!"
"Dacit Amser!" thus it wailed. And all the guests
Rose to the door, seeking whence came the voice,
And first the goodman went, his worn cheek pale
With fear, remembering the tales he heard

In boyhood of the voice. Long time they stood
Expecting, but no voice they heard,
nor sound,
But the loud river plunging down the rocks. *

Till, as they turned them houseward once again,
Above the roaring waters, three times heard,
The same voice pealed, "The Time is come! the Time!"
Then they affrighted and in silence went
Within the house, and then a mighty noise
Crashed round them, and it seemed a mighty hand
Shook all to the foundations. As they sat
In fear, without a word, a shapeless hag Stood at the casement. Then one, bolder, said,
"Why comest thou, thou loathly thing?" And she,
"Peace, chattering, I have naught with thee. I come
To tell the doom which waits this cursed house
And that which weds with it. But since thy tongue
Is thus injurious, never will I lift
The veil that doth conceal it." With the word
She vanished, none knew whither. When she had gone,
And all was still again, the cry, the cry,
Rose loud and ceased not. Then a deep affright
Fell upon all, and gloom. The hour grew late,

And from the hapless house the trembling guests
Went on their lonely ways. Rhydderch alone,
Grown careless in the flush of innocent love,
Delayed his love's departure, till they went
Alone at midnight down the haunted vale,
Across the roaring waters. Unafraid The lovers fared, nor voice nor shape of ill
Assailed them, undismayed, defying all The unseen powers of Death and Doom and Ill,
Strong in the virgin mail of mutual love.

But when the maid was safe within her home,
And it was time to part, some livelier sense
Of peril took her, and her boding fear Burst forth in tender words. "Dearest," she said,
"Good-night! Farewell! Some sense of coming ill Weighs down my heart. If we should meet no more,
Or if some long delay should cheat our love,
I will be faithful always, and will wed With thee, and none beside. Ay, though the powers
Of ill should part us all our lives and leave me Widowed of thee!" And he, "Fear not, my life,
The Power of Love protects us. If I come not At once to claim thee, as indeed I hope,

And if the powers of ill have might to part
Our lives awhile, yet am I true to thee. It may be some dark ruin waits our house
For some forgotten wrong; yet, what care I? They cannot touch our lives, these envious powers,
Nor blight our love. What care I for the rest,
My treasure, having thee?" Then, with a kiss, They parted unafraid, and the youth passed
The ceaseless voices and the roaring stream
Undaunted, clothed with love, and caring naught For things of earth or air.
But as he sped Across the self-same fields, which long years past
The ploughshare broke, hard by some haunted cave
Beneath the hill, a ring of fairy green Before him showed, 'round him bursts of mirth
Caane of invisible throats, and silvery sounds
Of elfin music sweet; and, rapt in love, And thinking careless of his dear alone, He stepped within the circle, and was lost,
While Time abould last, to home, and kin, and love.

For nowhere might his sorrowing parents find Trace of their son. They searched the country round, Through every grove and brake; they searched the depths .

Of the loud plunging stream ; but never at all
 They found him. Then, when many weeks had gone,
 They sought a hermit in his holy cell,
 And told him all, the wailing cry which rang
 Through the sad night, the loathly form which came.
 They told him all, and he, with grief and tears,
 Knowing what judgment must o'ertake the youth,
 Though guiltless, bade the mourners hope no more
 To see him, whether in life he was or death ;
 And they, lamenting him as lost, at last
 Lived their old life, and all was as before,
 Till, losing not then sorrow, but bent down
 By weight of time, they passed, and in the ground
 Were laid, but never again beheld their son.

But Gwen, the gentle maiden, when she knew
 That which had been, and how her love was gone,
 Mourned for him long, and long time would lament
 The cruelty of fate, but never at all
 Believed that he was dead, for still she held
 That he would come again—it might be soon,
 It might be after years, but still would come,
 As his word promised. So she dried her tears,

Feeding a deathless hope, and every day,
 Morning and evening, when the circling sun
 Burst from the gates of dawn, or sank in night,
 Upon the summit of the scarped rock
 Would stand, and scan the landscape far and near,
 Seeking her love's return, and, when he came not,
 Descend in grief. Year after year she came,
 Till from love's casements her unfaltering soul
 Looked dimly, and the gathering snows of time
 Whitened her chestnut locks, yet still she came,
 Steadfast, nor failed of hope, while yet she could,
 Still looking for her love. Until, at last, by the old chapel of the Van, they laid Her mortal body and undying hope.

The years slipped by, the undelaying year,
 And one by one they passed, the young and old
 Who knew the story ; scarcely one was left
 To tell of Rhydderch or his fate ; the world
 Rolled round upon its course ; young lives were born,
 Grew ripe, and faded ; many a youth and maid
 Came careless, rapt in love, and read the stone
 Which told of Gwen, nor knew what powers of ill
 Blighted her life and hope, for never more

The elfin music sounded on the leas
Since that dread night of Yule. Another
race,
With other hopes and fears, was on
the earth,
And the old vanished hopes, and fears,
and loves,
Were gone, clean gone, like mist upon
the hills.

* * * *

Then, one fair summer morning,
from the cave
Where, on that sad night four score
years ago,
His footsteps strayed, Rhydderch came
forth again
In all the pride of youth. His heart
beat high
With love and hope, nor felt he any
change,
More than he feels, who, a brief month
or more,
Leaves his loved home. His longing
heart was full ;
He listened to the joyous notes of song
Which the gay thrushes sang, as when
he went
To meet his love. Slow Nature showed
no change,
The old oaks seemed the same, his
sweetheart's home
The same, or hardly changed. The
bitter Past
Touched him no more, who for the
Future looked
And recompence of love. There were
the graves
Beneath the yew, where he in happy
tryst
Had lingered with his love when moon-
rise came,
As soon he should again. "He had
been ill,

Entranced, and the good folk who
tended him,
He knew not where, made light of the
long weeks
Which lay 'twen him and health.
When he was there
"Twas Yule-tide, now 'twas May." He
raised his eyes
To see if there, where then it used to
wait,
A girl's form waited. Something gray
was there,
Half-hidden beneath the yew. Was
it herself ?
He vaulted o'er the wall, and found—a
stone
Gray touched by time, and graven on
it deep
In words half-hid by lichen, the sweet
name
Of her he loved, " Died, aged three-
score years,"
And in some strange year, forty years
to come.

Then not so much a sense of grief
and pain
Took him as fear. He knew not what
had been ;
He knew not what he was. His
throbbing pulse
Grew slower at the chill cold touch of
fate,
And great perplexity and new-born
doubt,
And some half-consciousness of long-
dead years,
As of a dream, enchain'd him. Soon
he thought
The mists would vanish, leaving all
things clear,
And then the love, the passion of his
youth

Once more would live again. So,
eagerly
He left the place of graves, and took
his way
Along the well-known paths, to where
he saw,
In the old spot—the same, yet not the
same—
The roof-tree of Pantannas. Not as
yet
Had he seen human face, and a new
fear
Came on him, and strange shame, as
of one come
From other air than earth's; for now
he knew
That either he was dazed and weak of
brain,
Or some great change had passed upon
his life,
Which nothing but the gaze of human
eyes
And the remembered tones of human
speech
Might ever again dispel. And so he
went
Up the old path, and gained the well-
known door,
And in the old room stood again and
mused,
Changed—yet the same; but human
face or voice
He saw not. All the people were
afiel'd,
Nor was there any there to see or hear
Of those he knew of old. Then, when
the load
Of silence grew too great, through the
still house,
In his high youthful voice, he called for
one,
His childish serving boy, who always
loved

To follow him, whether with horse or
hound,
All day upon the hills, "Ilan, 'tis I,
I have come back, 'Deuwch yma.'"
The high voice
Through the void space resounding
clear, at last
Echoed to where, within a sunny nook,
Bent double with the weight of ninety
years,
There dozed an aged man, half deaf,
half blind,
And when he heard, his limbs began to
shake,
And he to mutter to himself; again
It came, the old man trembled to his
feet:
The third time came the cry, and then
in haste,
Tottering, the aged figure, bowed and
bent,
Moved quickly to the door, and there
beheld
His long-lost master, fair in youthful
bloom,
Unchanged, and in his habit as he was
When all the world was young.
The old man's heart
Went out to him, who stood unmoved,
untouched,
Not knowing whom he saw. One word
alone
He uttered, "Rhydderch."
And with a flash of light
The Past revealed itself. The youth
knew all
That had been, reading in another's face
The unnoted flight of Time. His life
was done;
He knew it now. All his old longings
dead;
Dust was his love, and all his yearnings
dust;

Dust was his life, and all his body dust.
No more upon the old earth could he
 bear

To walk amid the light of garish day,
And when the white-haired man, with
 tears of joy,

Would fain have kissed his hand, the
 Life in Death

Shrank from the Death in Life, and
 fading, left

Naught but a thin dust, lost in empty
 air.

Thus side by side they move, the Lives
 of Toil

And Fancy. What is Fancy but the
 Past

Or Future, bathed in light which never
 shone,

Or shall, upon the earth, and yet which
 shows

Nearer than real Life, and clearer far—
A Life wherein the terror of the world,
Its mystery, its awe, its boundless
 hope,

Are plainer than in ours, wherein the
 pang

Of hopeless longing and unmerited pain
Which vex our thought, the blind un-
 equal lot

Which takes us, find some vague apo-
 logy,

And hope some dim fulfilment, and the
 ways

Of Fate are justified, the righteous rise,
The wicked fall? Die not, oh sacred
 star

Of Fancy! Show us still the charm,
 the awe,
The glamour of our lives, bitterer
 griefs,

Joys keener than our own; loftier
 heights,

Depths deeper still: keep mystery,
 which is

The nurse of knowledge, shading from
 the glare

Of the full noon tide sun, our tree of
 Life?

TO A GAY COMPANY.

A GRASSY little knoll I know,
Before the windows of my home,
Where, when the chill days longer
 grow,
And the slow Spring has come,

Forth gleams a golden company
Of lowly blossoms through the grass,
Smiling a welcome back to me
As the soft Spring days pass.

Daily they take the cloudless sun;
With innocent faces free from guile,
And a sweet yearning never done,
They look on him and smile.

And while he shines, the livelong day,
From early morn to failing light,
Stands patiently the dense array,
Content and smiling bright.

But if cold rain or wintry hail
Touch them, the careful petals fold,
Safe where no violence may assail
Their shining cups of gold.

Oh, silent, innocent choir! I seem
To hear your fairy voices rise,
Extolling faint, as in a dream,
Your great Lord in the skies;

And read in your wide-opened eyes
Strange thoughts and human histories,
Till from your humble lives seems
grown
Life fairer than your own.

Fair celandines, I love to see
Each year your radiant company
Bloom golden on the springing grass,
As the quick seasons pass.

No careless foot shall come to mar
Your peaceful lives, while life is mine ;
Still as the Spring-tide comes shall
shine
Each multitudinous star,

So like the others, and the dead
Dear blossoms of forgotten Mays,
The joyous Springs which now are fled,
The wondering childish days

When you, a joyous company,
Or yours, were of an age with me ;
When marvels filled the earth and sky,
Nor you could fade, nor I.

Still shall I seem to hear your voice
Of joyous praise, though all be still ;
The Spring-time, bidding all rejoice,
Through you and me shall thrill.

Whether we be alive on earth,
Or lying hidden in the mould,
The Spring shall come with throes of
birth,
And clothe the fields with gold.

And me, whom the same Maker made,
Shall no renewal touch ? Shall I
Beyond all hope decay and fade ?
Deeper than Spring-tide lie ?

Nay, nay ! the sun shines overhead,
The Spring-tide calls, the winter's
done ;
At last, from close depths dark and
dread,
I, too, shall greet the Sun.

FROM JUVENAL.

I READ to-day a Poet dead
In old Rome, centuries ago ;
Once more returned the days long fled,
The dried-up waters seemed to flow.

Once more the keen tongue known in
youth
Lashed the gross vices of the time,
Portraying with a dreadful truth
The sloughs of sense, the deeps of
crime.

Great city of the World ! were these
All that the race has gained of thee—
Foul lusts and soulless luxuries,
Fraud, bloodshed, depths of villany ?

Was this what we have left of Rome,
This blood-stained sink of dark
offence ?

Nay, still across the ages come
The high pure tones of innocence :

" Let nothing ever, base to see or hear,
Pass the chaste threshold where a
young soul is ;
The innocence of boyhood, oh, revere,
Lest what of vileness you conceive be
his.

" Despise not thou his pure and tender
youth,
But let his weakness stand 'twixt
thee and wrong."

Not wholly wert thou dumb, dread
voice of Truth !
Nor lost, oh sacred ministry of Song !

IGHTHAM NOTE.

THE gray house from the moat around
Rises four-square ; two white swans
glide ;
A falling stream's uncertain sound
Is heard on every side.

A home in an untroubled land,
As 'twas at first it is to-day ;
Unchanged the hushed quadrangles
stand,
Through centuries past away.

The drawbridge and the entrance tower
Are still as in those good old days,
Ere freedom baffled lawless power,
Which dullards love to praise.

So old, so gray, so ripe with time —
Ere the broad cedars on the grass
Came from some new-discovered clime
It saw the centuries pass.

So old and yet so new ; to-day
Flowers of Japan, in gold and white,
Its builders dreamt not of, make bright
Its gradual decay.

And rounding into leafy bowerz
The laurustinus' bulk is spread ;
A tall tree bending overhead
Its delicate wealth of flowers.

And over every moss-grown stone
A glamour of the dead is cast—
The charm of days deceased and done,
The phantoms of the Past.

A home, a hundred homes in one,
Before our English race grew great,
Before the doughty deeds were done
Which fixed her glorious fate ;

Before the dauntless Bucaneer
From Devon dared the Western seas,
And drove the sullen Don in fear,
And robbed his argosies ;

Before the White Rose and the Red,
Ere Crecy proved our England's might,
When scarce the Paynim learnt to
dread

The steel-clad Northern knight.

A hundred tales of good and ill,
Of love and right, of hate and wrong,
The joyance and the dole which fill
The treasure-house of song.

The old knights with their mail were
here,
The dames demure with high-built hair,
The grave ruffed sage, the cavalier
Flaunting his lovelocks fair,

The periwigged and powdered Beau,
The Dame with hoops and patches
brave ;

The generations come and go—
The cradle and the grave.

Our grandsires and our granddames
came ;
They came awhile, their times are
dead,
And we, the modern air and dame,
Are reigning in their stead.

Unchanged the old grange stands, and
will
When we in turn are past and gone ;

The hurrying years fit by us still,
Life glides unnoticed on.

And what the end? No Goth or
Hun
Can blot the record of thy past;
Shalt thou, unchanged, untroubled,
last
Till history be done?

The peasants spared thee, the long
shock
Of warring Roses came not near;
The Roundhead and the Cavalier,
The King's head on the block,

Thou hast survived. Shall peace o'er-
turn

What banded foemen deigned to spare,
In some deep hate, when all things fair
In one red ruin burn?

*
Or shall a wider faith and trust
Bind all, until men recognize
No good but mutual sacrifice,
Nor aim but to be just?

Thou liest within the net of Fate,
Oh ancient England of our love!
Howe'er the circling world may move,
Thou art, thou hast been great!

THE SECRET OF THINGS.

Did the Race of men descend from a Nature sublime,
From a type which is higher than man and almost divine,
Sinking from higher to lower through aeons of time,
Through a hopeless decay and slow unmeasured decline?

Whence came, then, this downward force to degrade what God gave?
Can we rest in the thought that we fell from a higher estate?
Shall the work of His hand grow weaker in time and fade,
And that which was once above death, sink down to the grave?

And if we are born with the seeds of a deep decay,
Can it ever be stayed, though it were by an Infinite Will;
Or are all things fated to fade and diminish away
Through all stages of lower life till Creation lies still?

Or if power there be to stay, and willing for good,
Where then shall be set the limit of gradual shame?
Not there, maybe, where we think, nor then when we would,
And how shall our being reascend to the height whence we came?

Or shall this faith rather be ours, that the Infinite Plan
Is worked by a gradual miracle bettering the Race,
Since the quickening Spirit breathed on the sea's dead face,
And the faint life stirred, which one day should blossom in Man?

It were like, indeed, to the work of an Infinite Might
 To raise all the gradual Past from lower to higher ;
 Nay, but where, were it thus, were there room for the heaven-sent light
 That, 'midst growing darkness shining, could bid us aspire ?

And what were our profit to rise from the general shame,
 If we knew that the Race were doomed to a deeper decay,
 Or if millions of lives that are past should wither on flame,
 Not rise from the darkness of Hell to a Heavenly day ?

And does not all Nature teem, not only with types that ascend,
 But with those their ineffable fates from a higher ideal degrade,
 High archetypes dwindling down, which from higher to lower tend,
 Keen organs, and powers of might, which to feeble energies fade ?

Great Universe, what is thy Secret, what are thy Laws ?
 Do they dwindle through secular time by the power of an Infinite Will ?
 Or do all things to Perfectness tend by a changeless ordinance still,
 Impelled by the upward force of an inborn Beneficent Cause ?

But if such were the law of things, how then should any ignore
 The self-same embryo growth of man and the lowest ape,
 Which an inborn necessity moulds to such difference of being and shape,
 That one rises to godlike discourse, one lies soulless for evermore ?

Or shall we believe, indeed, that deep down in the covering earth
 May be found, some day, a trace of a Being that once has been,
 Which in long-dead reons of time was parent of either birth,
 And, in Nature's gradual scheme, stood centred and fixed between ?

Can the Individual rise, though the Race sinks down in disgrace,
 And, while all is ruined beside, increase to a heavenly height ?
 Can the Individual sink to some dark, ineffable place,
 While the Race rises higher and higher in face of the Infinite Light ?

Is the soul of Humanity one with the Individual soul ?
 Shall each rise with the other or sink, as the suns are illumined or fade ?
 Shall the hand of the Maker show weak as the mous unchangeably roll,
 Grown helpless to stay the wreck of the Cosmos itself hath made ?

Nay, from out of the House of despair shall be heard a jubilant voice,
 Beneath the deepest depths and hopeless abysses of Ill,
 Which in cosmical accents immense, bids all things living rejoice,
 And out of the pit of Hell strive onward and upward still.

OH, EARTH!

On, earth ! that liest still to-night
 Beneath the starlit skies,
 How splendid dost thou loom and
 bright
 To planetary eyes !

But if some storm-cloud, vast and dark,
 Should hide thee from the day ;
 If through blind night no faintest spark
 Should force its feeble way,

No other would thy face appear,
 Than on this cloudless sky,
 Though all the world should quake
 with fear,
 Though all our race should die.

Great Universe ! too vast thou art,
 Too changeless and too far,
 Dull grows the brain and chill the
 heart
 Before the nearest star.

Oh, kindly earth ! upon thy breast
 For ever let me lie,
 Wrapt round with thy eternal rest,
 But gazing on the sky.

ON A BIRTHDAY.

WHAT shall be written of the man
 Who through life's mingled hopes and
 fears
 Touches to-day our little span
 Of seventy years :

Who, with force undiminished still,
 A Nestor stands among his peers,
 Full of youth's fire and dauntless will
 At seventy years ;

Who knows no creeping chill of age,
 But, rich in all which life endears,
 Keeps still the patriot's noble rage
 Through seventy years,

The form unbent, the flashing eye,
 The curious lore, the wit that cheers,
 The scorn of wrong which can defy
 His seventy years ;

To whom no wound which mars the
 state,
 No humblest neighbour's grief or tears,
 Appeal in vain for love or hate
 These seventy years ;

For whom home's happy radiance yet
 A steadfast beacon-fire appears,
 Bright through the storms, the stress,
 the fret
 Of seventy years :—

What else but this? “ Brave heart, be
 strong,
 Be of good hope ; life holds no fears,
 Nor death, for him who strives with
 wrong
 For seventy years.

Live, labour, spread that sacred light
 Of knowledge which thy soul reveres ;
 Fight still the old victorious fight
 Of seventy years.

Live, labour, ripen to fourscore
 While still the listening Senate hears ;
 Live till new summers blossom o'er
 These seventy years.

Or if a brighter briefer lot
 Withdraw thee from thy country's
 tears,
 Be sure there is where change is not,
 Nor age, nor years.”

IN A LABORATORY.

A MOST intelligent dog I took,
Affectionate, full of caressing grace,
With something of human love in his
look,

And such a trustful, half-human face.

I had learnt tricks, too—would give you
a paw

Where a brother-savant would offer a
hand,

Right or left, as you asked him; could
understand

Your speech—it might almost fill one
with awe,

Seeing how near to mankind, yet how
far

These dumb and pitiful creatures are;
How all their faith and belief and love
Is centred in Man as a Lord above.

And looking into his eyes for awhile,
For knowledge is precious and gained
through pain,

I bound him down with a pitying smile,
And deftly removed the left lobe of his
brain.

And then, with all that I had of skill,
I healed it again, so that presently,
Though lame and sick, in his love for
me,

The creature strove to obey my will.

And when I asked him to give me a paw,
He gave the left first, but when for
the right

I asked, his maimed brain failing him
quite,

Gave the left—and I thought I had
touched a Law.

So I persevered, and the brute again,
With a loving, sorrowful look of pain,
Brought the left paw over the helpless
right,

And I marked the effort, with deep
delight.

And having pushed knowledge so far,
again

I divided the opposite lobe of the brain,
And the poor brute, though willing to
offer a paw,

Could no longer obey—and I grasped
a Law.

Later on, still athirst for knowledge,
once more

I carved the weak brain, as I did
before,

Till the poor dumb wretch, as he lay
on his side,

With a loving look regarding me, died.

Poor brute! may his pain be for knowl-
edge, and I,

If I grasp not the clue, yet I may by-
and-by.

Strange how weak Man is, and infirm
of will,

For sometimes I see him and shudder
still!

THE SUMMONS.

MARCH 28, 1884.

AWAY from love of child and wife,
From the first flush of ripening life,
From books and Art, from all things
fair,

From homely joys, from public care,
A low voice summons us away,
And prince and peasant must obey.

Sometimes amid the noonday throng,
Amid the feast, the dance, the song,
Amid the daily wholesome round,
The inevitable accents sound,
And the ear hears the summons come
As his who calls the truant home.

And sometimes in the lonely night
It sounds and brings with it the light.
Alone, with none but strangers nigh,
Comes the cold voice which bids us die;
Sudden, or after months of pain,
And weary vigils spent in vain.

What shall it bring of profit then
To have loomed large in the eyes of
men?
Or what of comfort shall endure,
Save soaring thoughts and memories
pure?
Nought else of thoughts and things that
be
Can solace that great misery.

Oh dreadful summons, full of fear
For weakling mortal souls to hear!
When that last moment shall be ours,
'Mid failing brain and sinking powers,
May one great strength our steps
attend,
The constant presence of a Friend.

SILVERN SPEECH.

THERE are whom Fate's obscure decree
Dooms in deep solitude to be;
For whom no word that mortal spoke
The sullen silence comes to break;
And e'en the music of the Spheres
Falls only on unheeding ears.
For them, life's loud processions seem
A noiseless and nameless dream.

Around their prison, joyous life
Echoes with noise of fruitful strife.
Yet, to their cells no sound may come,
But all the universe is dumb.
Ah! strange that while all things
rejoice *
Man only should be wanting voice!
Ah! strange that morning-song of bird
By living ears is never heard!
Nor mighty master-music dim,
Nor Heaven-thrilled note of soaring
hymn,
Nor rippling laugh of happy child,
Nor the Deep's thunder-voices wild!
Unreached by life's tumultuous sound
Even as the dead, beneath the ground.
And still, though all creation groan,
Unmoved in loneliness alone.
Ah, cruel fate! unequal doom
That sinks the innocent in gloom!
What first the depths of chaos stirred
But the Ineffable Spoken Word?
What else our inmost souls can reach
Like that Divinest Gift of Speech?
Ah, hapless fate that thus deprives
Of half their life unconscious lives!
Ah! could a soft compassion gain
To soothe the victim's lonely pain!

What if with knowledge, love combined,
Can wake the undeveloped mind,
And without speech or sound can teach
The use of sound alike and speech;
To those dumb solitudes profound
Convey some blessed ghost of sound,
And kindle from the dormant sense
Bright sparks of new intelligence;
Assist the undeveloped brain
New loftier summits to attain,
Till knowledge grow the guide of
love,
And love turned Heavenward point
above;

And the illumined soul confess
The innate love of Righteousness !
Surely a miracle it is
Which works so blest a change as this !

THE OBELISK.

Upon the river side,
Above the turbid stream,
Which rolls on, deep and wide :
Strange as a dream,

The obelisk defies
Its dim unnumbered years,
Facing the murky skies,
Their snows, their tears.

Three thousand years it stood
Upon the sweet, broad Nile,
And watched the gliding flood,
The blue skies smile.

And many a century more,
Where it of old would stand,
It lay half covered o'er
By the hot sand.

Now with signs graven deep,
In this our Northern Isle,
Where the skies often weep
And seldom smile,

Once more again it rears
Its dim, discrowned head,
Though all those countless years
Its life is dead.

Forgotten is the lore
Its mystic symbols keep ;
Its builders evermore
Sleep their last sleep.

Amid this Northern air,
Beyond the storm-tost sea,
Where earth nor sky is fair,
Why shouldst thou be ?

Standing amidst the strife,
The modern city's roar,
Memorial of a life
Dead evermore,

And of the end of all
That shows to-day so strong,
The greatness that shall fall,
After how long ?

The city which to-day
Shows mightier than thy own,
Which yet shall pass away,
Like thine o'erthrown.

And thou ? Where shalt thou be
When Time has ruined all,
And Faith and Empery
Together fall ?

Shalt thou at last find rest
Beneath the river's flow,
And mark upon its breast
New ages grow ?

Or shall some unborn race
Take thee as prize of war,
And set thee up to grace
New cities far ?

Or shall our Northern frost,
Our chill and weeping skies,
Sap thee, till thou art lost
To mortal eyes ?

The Past it is, the Past
Whose ghost thou comest here ;
The years fleet by as fast,
The end draws near.

But while the Present flies
The far-off Past survives ;
It lives, it never dies,
In newborn lives.

It lives, it never dies,
And we the outcome are
Of countless centuries &
And ages far.

What if our thought might see
The Future ere it rise,
The ages that shall be,
Before our eyes :

And if incorporate,
Graven by some mystic hand,
Our hieroglyph of Fate
By thine might stand ?

Nay, nay, our Future shows
Implicitly in thee ;
For well the thinker knows
What was, shall be.

And though a ghost thou art,
'Tis well that thou art here
To touch each careless heart
With hope and fear.

A SONG OF EMPIRE.

JUNE 20, 1887.

FIRST Lady of our English race,
In Royal dignity and grace
Higher than all in old ancestral blood,
But higher still in love of good,
And care for ordered Freedom, grown
To a great tree where'er
In either hemisphere,
Its vital seeds are blown ;

Where'er with every day begun
Thy English bugles greet the coming
sun !

Thy life is England's. All these fifty
years
Thou from thy lonely Queenly place
Hast watched the clouds and sunshine
on her face ;
Hast marked her changing hopes and
fears ;
Her joys and sorrows have been always
thine ;
Always thy quick and Royal sympathy
Has gone out swiftly to the humblest
home,
Wherever grief and pain and suffering
come.

Therefore it is that we
Take thee for head and symbol of our
name.
For fifty years of reign thou wert the
same,
Therefore to-day we make our jubilee.
Firm set on ancient right, as on thy
people's love,
Unchecked thy wheels of empire on-
ward move.
Not as theirs is thy throne
Who, though their hapless subjects
groan,
Sit selfish, caring not at all,
Until the fierce mob surges and they fall,
Or the assassin sets the down-trod free.
Not such thy fate on this thy jubilee,
But love and reverence in the hearts of
all.

Oh England ! Empire wide and great
As ever from the shaping hand of fate
Did issue on the earth, august, large
grown !

What were the Empires of the past to
thine,
The old old Empires ruled by kings
divine—
Egypt, Assyria, Rome? What rule
was like thine own,
Who over all the round world bearest
sway?
Not those alone who thy commands
obey
Thy subjects are ; but in the boundless
West
Our grandires lost, still is thy reign
confest.
“ The Queen ” they call thee, the young
People strong,
Who, being Britons, might not suffer
wrong,
But are reknit with us in reverence for
thee ;
Therefore it is we make our jubilee.

See what a glorious throng they come,
Turned to their ancient home,
The children of our England! See
What vigorous company
Thou sendest, Greater England of the
Southern Sea !
Thy stately cities, sown with domes
and spires,
Chase the illumined night with festal fires
In honour of their Queen, whose happy
reign
Began when, 'mid theiris central roar,
The naked savage trod the pathless
plain.
Thousands of miles, North, South,
East, West, to-day,
Their countless herds and flocks un-
numbered stray.
Theirs are the vast primatal forest
depths profound ;
Yet everywhere are found

The English laws, the English accents
fair,
'Mid burning North or cooler Southern
air.
A world within themselves, and with
them blent
Island with continent.
The green ~~iles~~, jewels on the tropic
blue,
Where flower and tree and bird are
strange and new ;
Or that which lies within a temperate
air
As summer-England fair ;
Or those, our Southern Britain that
shall be,
Set in the lonely sea.
Lands of deep fiord and snow-clad
soaring hill,
Where-through the ocean-currents ebb
and fill,
And craters vast, from which the
prisoned force
Of the great earth-fires runs its dreadful
course.
And vales of fern and palm, whence
rising like a dream
High in mid-heaven, the ghostly ice-
fields gleam.

And from her far and wintry North
The great Dominion issues forth,
Fit nurse of stalwart British hearts and
strong ;
From her black pine woods, deep in
snow,
Her billowy prairies boundless as the
sea,
Where on the sweet untroubled soil
Yearly the unnoticed, countless wild-
flowers blow,
And by men's fruitful and compelling
toil

Yearly the deep and bounteous harvests grow ;
 From the lone plains, o'er which the icy wind
 Sweeps from the North, leaving the Pole behind ;
 In whose brief summer suns, so fierce they shine,
 Flourish alike the apple and the vine ;
 From teeming ancient cities bright and fair,
 Whether in summer's heat or frosty wintry air,
 Stamped with the nameless charm and grace
 Of a more joyous race ;
 Or on the rounding prairie nestling down
 Homestead and frequent new-built town.
 Even to those ultimate wilds where comes to be
 Another Westminster on the Pacific Sea.

Nor shall thy Western Isles
 Be wanting, where the high green breakers fall
 Upon the torrid shore, and nature smiles ;
 And yet sometimes broods over all,
 Thick woods and hot lagunes with steaming breath,
 A nameless presence with a face of death.
 Fair balmy Isles, where never wintry air
 Ruffles the scentless tropic blossoms fair,
 Upon whose sun-warmed fruitful soil
 Our father's dusky freedmen toil.
 Lands of bright plumes that flash from tree to tree,

Long creepers trailing thick with brilliant bloom,
 And loud upon the forest's silent gloom
 The plunging surges of the encircling sea. ¶

And from the ancient land
 Scorching beneath the strong unsailing sun,
 Round thee thy unnumbered subject millions stand ;
 From many-a storied city fair,
 Old ere our England, first begun,
 From marble tomb and temple white,
 Built ere our far forefathers were,
 And still a miracle defying Time ;
 Palaces gray with age and dark with crime,
 Fierce superstitions, only quenched in blood,
 And sweet flower-fancies yearning towards the light,
 And lustral cleansings in the sacred flood,
 Where by dim temple cool, or shaded street,
 From hill or parched plain the wayworn pilgrims meet.

And from the unhappy Continent
 Which breeds the savage and the slave—
 From our enormous South, there shall be sent
 A scanty band of strong self-governed men.
 And from those poisoned swamps, to-day a grave,
 But which one day shall smile with plenty, when
 The onward foot of Knowledge, slow, sublime,

Has traversed her and set her children
free
From ocean to her fabulous inland
sea,
And the fierce savage, full of kingly
grace,
Is father of a gentler race,
And peaceful commerce heals the
wounds of Time,
And the long history of blood and pain
Comes nevermore again.

And nearer to thee still; and dearer
yet,
Thy people of these little Northern
Isles,
Who never shall their Queen forget,
Nor be forgotten, whether Fortune
smiles
Or armed Europe storm around,
Whom none assail, beyond the waves'
deep sound,
Behind their surge-struck ramparts safe
and free.
These are thy closest subjects, these
The brain and heart of Empire, as thy
Rose
Within its close-ranged petals comes to
hold
A perfumed heart of gold,
Wherein the seed of the miraculous
flower,
Safe hid, defies Fate's power.
And most of all thy wondrous mother-
town
Upon our broad Thames sitting like a
crown;
Who, 'mid her healthful labour-laden
air,
Grows every day more fair:
Whom not for fairness do her children
prize,
But for her gracious homely memories—

A nation, not a city, the loved home
Whereto the longing thoughts of exiled
Britons come!

What is it that their voices tell?
What is it that in naming thee they
praise?
Not wider empire only; that is well.
But there are worthier triumphs,
peaceful days,
Just laws, a people happier than before,
And rolling on untroubled evermore,
With larger stream, and fuller and more
free
The tide of ordered liberty.
These things than empire higher are,
Higher and nobler far.

Our old Draconic Law
With children's blood cemented, no
more kills
Its tale of innocent victims. Pitying
Love
Amid the abjects deigns to-day to
move
Whom no man cared for. If the cruel
city
Still claims its thousands, by the out-
casts stand
Pure men and women in a gentle hand,
Linked in a ministry of Love and
Pity.
No more the insensate State
Binds down the worker, to exaggerate
The unequal gifts of Fate,
But comes instead, some care for
common good,
Some glimmering sense of growing
brotherhood.
No more half deafened by the unresting
loom,
Soulless as is the brute, the pallid
children pine;

Nor hapless slaves, half naked, 'mid the gloom
 And grime and squalor of the sunless mine,
 The young girl-workers coarsen, but all take
 Some modest gleam of knowledge, which may breed
 The faith that is above, yet under, every creed,
 And of these humble lives, one day shall make
 True citizens indeed.

Nor shall thy peoples' voice
 Keep silence of the salutary change
 Which brought the gift of fullest freedom down
 To humble lives, whether by field or town;
 The potent gift, and strange,
 Which wakes alone the wider civic sense,
 Which, more than knowledge, sobers heart and mind,
 And rich and poor in closer ties can bind,
 And knits a nation firm in harmony!
 Let civil broils and fiercer dissidence come—we are one. What care have we?
 In speech, in action, we are free.
 No mob law need we fear, or senseless anarchy,
 And for all these rejoice.

What law for us has done,
 For all our greater England 'neath the sun,
 Let us do now, building on high a State
 Of half the World confederate!

Sure, 'twere the noblest victory of mind
 Thy scattered realms to bind ;
 To guide the toiling, hopeless feet
 To where is work for all, and life is sweet ;
 To teach our millions their great heritage,
 To call together high world-councils sage,
 Strong as the Priest's, in this our island-home ;
 Then, though the armed world shall come,
 What care, what fear, have we,
 Who, being free, are one ; and, being one, are free ?

If all the wide Earth brings our millions food,
 And if our navies whiten every sea,
 If we have rest and wider brotherhood,
 All these began with thee ;
 And shall, if Heaven so will, still more increase
 With thy remaining years, till blessed Peace,
 Half frightened from us now by grave alarms
 Of half a world in arms,
 Shall brood, a white-winged Angel, o'er the Earth.
 Then may the rule of Wrong be done !
 Then may a new and Glorious Sun
 Gild the illuminated World ! and then
 Come Righteousness to men !

Three sovereigns of our English line
 Have reached thy length of rule, each
 of his name the third,
 But never England's heart was stirred
 By those as 'tis by thine.

Our Henry died lonely and girt with
foes ;
Our greater Edward fell in dotage ere
life's close :
And he thy grandsire knew a troublous
time,
A dim pathetic figure ! full of pain
And care too great for mortal to
sustain,
And in his rayless sorrow grown
sublime !

Three Queens have swayed
Our England's fortunes—great Elizabeth.
In whose brave times the blast of war
blew loud and fierce and far.
Her dauntless sailors dared the un-
bounded West,
And fought the Armada's might, and
did prevail,
And wheresoe'er was seen an English
sail
Her Empire was confest ;
And round her gracious throne immortal
flowers of song
Bloomed beautiful, bloomed long,
And left our English tongue as sweet
as it was strong.

And when a century and more had
passed
In blood and turmoil, came a Queen
at last.
Her soldiers and her sailors once again
Conquered on tented field and on the
main,
And once more rose the choir of song ;
Not as the Elizabethan, deep and
strong,
But, tripping lightly on its jewelled
feet,
Issued politely sweet,

And Shakespeare's tongue and Milton's
learned to dance
The minuet of France.

And now again once more
A Queen reigns o'er us as before ;
Again by land and sea
We cast the chequered sum of victory,
Once more our English tongue
Wakes to unnumbered bursts of song.
A great choir lifts again its accents fair,
And to those greater singers, if we find
To-day no answering mind,
'Tis that too large the Present fills the
view,
Yet has its great names too.
Part of the glorious fellowship are we,
The great Victorian company,
Which, since old Cadmon's deep voice
caroled strong,
Through England's chequered story
bore along
The high pure fire of the world's
sweetest song.

But not in the increase
Of Empire, or the victories of peace,
Chiefly we seek thy praise.
But that thy long and gracious days,
Lived in the solitude that hems a throne,
Since thy great sorrow came and left
thee lone,
Were ever white, and free from thought
of blame.
Not once in thy long years shadow of
envy came
On thee, or him, whose stainless man-
hood bore
Thy love's unfading flower. Never
before
In all our England was a royal home
Whereto the loving thoughts of humble
hearts might come.

Thy children's children stand around
thy knees,
Their children come in turn as fair as
these ;
Thy people and thy children turn to
thee,
Knit all in one by bonds of sympathy
With thee, our Queen, art we ;
Therefore we make our solemn jubilee !

Flash, festal fires, high on the joyous
air !
Clash, joy-bells ! joy-guns, roar ! and,
jubilant trumpets, blare !
Let the great noise of our rejoicing
rise !
Gleam, long-illumined cities, to the
skies
Round all the earth, in every clime,
So far your distance half confuses time !
As in the old Judrean history,
Fling wide the doors and set the
prisoners free !
Wherever England is o'er all the world,
Fly, banner of Royal England, stream
unfurled !
The proudest Empire that has been, to-
day
Rejoices and makes solemn jubilee.
For England ! England ! we our voices
raise !
Our England ! England ! England ! in
our Queen we praise !
We love not war, but only peace,
Yet never shall our England's power
decrease !
Whoever guides our helm of State,
Let all men know it, England shall be
great !
We hold a vaster Empire than has
been !
Nigh half the race of man is subject to
our Queen !

Nigh half the wide, wide earth is ours
in see !
And where her rule comes, all are free.
And therefore 'tis, oh Queen, that we,
Knit fast in bonds of temperate liberty,
Rejoice to-day, and, make our solemn
jubilee !!

TEMPERANCE.

Whoso can rule his soul
In prudence still ;
Who can his heart control,
His thought, his will ;

Whom, temperate in all,
Labour and play,
No low desires enthrall
Nor lead astray ;

Seeking the golden mean,
To Duty vowed,—
Ay, though black depths between
Roar dark and loud ;

We shall new pleasures find,
More fruitful far
Than for the undisciplined
And sensual are ;

A kingdom absolute,
A wider sway
Than his whom myriads mute
And blind obey.

For in his soul one voice
Alone is heard,
Which bids his being rejoice,
One perfect word,

Stronger than heated youth,
Mightier than wrong—

The Godlike voice of Truth,
A constant song.

Silence all discords loud
Within the breast !
Fly from the troubled crowd
To peace and rest !

And let the enfranchised soul,
From self set free,
Find in Right's dread control
True Liberty !

THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE.

AN ODE. (JULY 4, 1887.)

With soaring voice and solemn music
sing !
High to Heaven's gate let pealing
trumpets ring !
To-day our hands consolidate
The Empire of a thousand years :
Delusive hopes, distracting fears,
Have passed and left her great.
For Britain, Britain, we our jubilant
anthems raise.
Uplift your voices all : worthy is she of
praise !

Our Britain, issuing at the call of Fate
From her lone islets in the Northern
Sea,
Donned her Imperial robe, assumed her
crowned state,
Took the sole sceptre of the Free ;
'Mid clang of arms her crescent glory
rose,
By shattered fleet and flaming town :
Victorious at the last o'er all her foes,
Embattled rolls her splendid story
down.

Soldier and seaman, side by side,
Her strong sons, greatly dared and
bravely died.
Close on their steps her dauntless
toilers went
O'er unknown sea and pathless conti-
nent,
Till when the centuries of strife were
done
They left the greatest Realm beneath
the sun.
Praise them and her ; your grateful
voices raise.
Mother of Freedom ! thou art worthy
of our praise !

No more we seek our Realm's increase
By War's red rapine, but by white-
winged Peace :
To-day we seek to bind in one,
Till all our Britain's work be done —
Through wider knowledge closer grown,
As each fair sister by the rest is known,
And mutual Commerce, mighty to
efface
The envious bars of Time and Place,
Deep-pulsing from a common heart
And through a common speech ex-
pressed, —
From North to South, from East to
West,
Our great World Empire's every part :
A universal Britain, strong
To raise up Right and beat down Wrong.
Let this thing be ! who shall our Realm
divide ?
Ever we stand together, Kinmen, side
by side !

To-day we would make free
Our millions of their glorious heritage.
Here, Labour crowds in hopeless
misery, —

There, is unbounded work and ready wage.
 The salt breeze, calling, stirs our Northern blood,—
 Lead we the toilers to their certain good ;
 Guide we their feet to where Is spread for those who dare
 A happier Britain 'neath an ampler air.
 Uprise, O Palace fair ! With ordered knowledge of each far off land
 For all to understand ! Uprise, O Palace fair, where for the Poor shall be
 Wise thought and love to guide o'er the dividing sea.

First Lady of our British race ! 'Tis well that with thy peaceful Jubilee This glorious dream begins to be. This thy lost Consort would ; this would thy Son,
 Who has seen all thy Empire face to face And fain would leave it One. Oh, may the Hand which rules our Fate Keep this our Britain great ! We cannot tell, we can but pray Heaven's blessing on our work to-day. Uprise, O Palace fair, where every eye may see This proud embodied Unity ! For Britain and our Queen one voice we raise,— Laud them, rejoice, peal forth : worthy are they of praise ?

DAVID GWYN.

DAVID GWYN was a Welshman bold who pined a slave in the hulks of Spain, Taken years since in some mad emprise with Francis Drake on the Spanish main. Long in that cruel country he shared the captive's bitter and hapless lot ; Slowly the dead years passed and left him dreaming still of the days that were not, Of tiny Radnor, or stately Brecknock, or Cardigan's rain-swept heights may be, Or green Caermarthen, or rich Glamorgan, or Pembroke sitting on either sea. Sickening within his squalid prison, while still as the circling seasons came The fierce sun beat on the brown Sierras, springtide and summer and autumn the same, Almost hope failed the dauntless sailor, chained in an alien and hateful land, Lonely and friendless, starved and buffeted, none to pity or understand, Pining always and ageing yearly as slow Time whitened and bowed his head, While longing and hate burned high and higher as life sank lower and hope fell dead, With brutes for his gaolers, and fiends for his fellows, chained to him ceaselessly night and day, Eleven autumns, eleven winters wasted their wearisome length away.

Then there awoke round his floating prison clang of hammers and bustle of men ;
Shipwrights labouring late and early woke old thoughts in his heart again.

" Spain will lay waste your heretic island with fire and sword ere the winter be
come,

And you and the rest of your felon crew shall row the galleys which sack your
home."

The hot blood flushed to the prisoner's forehead, but never a word in reply
said he,

Toiling obediently days and weeks till the great fleet sailed on the summer sea ;
Splendid galleons towering skyward with gilded masts and with streamers brave,
Floating proudly to martial music over the blue Lusitanian wave,
Four great galleys leading the van, and in one midst the close-thronged benches
sate

David Gwyn, a forgotten oarsman, nursing a burning heart of hate.

So along the windless ocean slow the great Armada sped,

Two unclouded weeks of summer blazed the hot sun overhead.

Hourly from the high deck-pulpits preaching rose and chant and prayer,

And the cloying fumes of incense on the brisk Atlantic air ;

Courtiers fine and sea-worn sailors jesting the slow hours away,

Silken sails and blazoned standards flapping idly day by day,

And within his high poop-turret, more than mortal to behold,

The High Admiral Medina lounging idly, clothed with gold :

Not a thought of peril touched them, not a dream of what might come,

Proudly sailing, sure of conquest, with the benison of Rome,

And far down among the oarsmen's benches, fainting, desperate,

David Gwyn, a patriot helpless with a burning heart of hate.

With the roaring Bay of Biscay louder winds and greyer skies,

And the galleons plunge and labour, and the rolling mountains rise ;

Blacker loom the drifting storm clouds, fiercer grow the wind and sea,

Far and wide the galleons scatter, driving, drifting helplessly.

Higher mount the thundering surges ; tossed to heaven, or fathoms down,

Rear or plunge the cumbersome galleys while the helpless oarsmen drown.

Like a diver the *Diana* slides head first beneath the wave,

Not a soul of all her hundreds may her labouring consorts save.

Now to larboard, now to starboard, shattered, tott from side to side.

Helpless rolls the great Armada, shorn of all its pomp and pride.

Down between those toppling ridges, groaning, straining in his place,

David Gwyn among the oarsmen sits with triumph in his face.

Then amid the roaring seas, when hope was gone and death was near,
And the hearts of all the Spaniards sinking, failing them for fear,

Boldly to the haughty Captain, David Gwyn the oarsman went,
 Veiling with a fearless frankness all the depth of his intent.
 "Quick, Señor ! the ship is sinking ; like her consort will she be,
 Buried soon with slaves and freemen, fathoms deep beneath the sea.
 Give me leave and I will save her ; I have fought the winds before,
 Fought and conquered storms and foemen many a time on sea and shore."
 And the haughty Captain, knowing David Gwyn a seaman bold,
 Since upon the Spanish main the foemen sailed and fought of old,
 Answered, turning to his prisoner : " Save the ship, and thou shalt gain
 Freedom from thy life-long fetters, guerdon from the Lord of Spain."
 Then from out the prisoner's eye there flashed a sudden gleam of flame,
 And a light of secret triumph o'er his clouded visage came,
 Thinking of his Cymric homestead and the fair years that were gone,
 And his glory who should save her from the thralldom of the Don.
 "I will save your ship," he answered ; "trust me wholly, have no fear :
 Pack the soldiers under hatches ; leave the main deck free and clear."
 Doubting much the Don consented ; only, lest the slaves should rise,
 By each oarsman sat a soldier, watching him with jealous eyes.
 Little knew he of the cunning, secret signs, and watchwords born
 Of long years of cruel fetters, stripes and hunger, spite and scorn.
 Little thought he every prisoner as in misery he sate
 Hid a dagger in his waistband, waiting for the call of Fate.

David Gwyn, the valiant seaman, long time battled with the main,
 Till the furious storm-wind slackened and the ship was safe again.
 Sudden then he gave the signal, raised his arm and bared his head.
 Every oarsman rising swiftly stabbed his hapless warden dead,
 Seized his arms, and, fired with conquest, mad with vengeance, like a flood
 On the crowded 'tween-decks bursting, left the Spaniards in their blood.
 David Gwyn was now the Captain, and the great ship all his own ;
 Well the slaves obeyed their comrade, thus to sudden greatness grown.
 Straight for France the stout *Pasana* shaping, sudden on her lee
 Don Diego in the *Royal*, foaming through the stricken sea,
 Driven by full four hundred oarsmen, nigh the monstrous galley drew.
 Then from out her thundering broadside swift the sudden lightning flew ;
 In among Gwyn's crowded seamen straight the hurtling missiles sped ;
 Nine strong sailors in a moment lay around their Captain dead.
 David Gwyn, the dauntless Captain, turning to his comrades then—
 "God has given you freedom : earn it : fear not ; quit yourselves like men.
 Lay the ship aboard the *Royal* : free your comrades and be free."
 The strong oarsmen bent, obedient, rowing swiftly, silently,
 Till, as if in middle ocean striking on a hidden rock,
 All the stout *Pasana's* timbers, quivering, reeling with the shock,

Straight on board the crowded *Reys*/ leapt that band of desperate men,
Freed the slaves, and left no Spaniard who might tell the tale again ;
And the sister galleys stately with fair winds sped safely on,
Under David Gwyn, their Captain, and cast anchor at Bayonne.
And King Henry gave them largesse, and they parted, every one
Free once more to his own country, and their evil days were dont.

David Gwyn to England coming won the favour of the Queen ;
Well her Grace esteemed his valour in the perils that had been.
What I had those swift, mighty galleys, which could wind and tide defy,
Winged with speed the slow Armada when our weak fleet hovered by ?
Had not then that sullen quarry, ploughing helpless on the plain,
Turned and crashed the nimble hunters, and rewrit the fate of Spain ?
Who shall tell ? But his were doughty deeds and worthy lasting fame,
Though the country he delivered never yet has known his name.

Did he seek again the home of his youth, did he let the years go peacefully by,
Breathing the sweet clear air of the hills, till his day was done and he came to die ?
By tiny Radnor, or stately Brecknock, or Cardigan's rain-swept heights may he,
Or green Caermarthen, or rich Glamorgan, or Pembroke sitting on either sea ?
Did he dream sometimes 'mid the nights of storm of those long-dead years in the
hulks of Spain,
That stealthy onset, that dread revenge, with the wild winds drowning the cries
of pain ?
Did the old man shudder to think of the blood, when the knife pierced deep to
the Spaniard's heart ?
Nay, to each of us all is his Life assigned, his Work, his Fate, his allotted Part

SONG.

FAREWELL ! farewell ! Adown the
ways of night *
The red sun sinks, and with him takes
the light ;
O'er the dull East the gathering shadows
grow,
And turn to gray the Western after-
glow.

Farewell ! farewell ! But Day shall
come again ;
Shall hope then die, and prayers be
breathed in vain ?

Our faithful hopes outlive the fleeting
day ;
Stronger than Life and Death and Time
are they.

Ah ! see the last faint ray has ceased to
flame.
Courage ! our parted walls are still the
same.

Round is the earth, and round the
estranging sea,
And Time's swift wheel which brings
thee back to me.

Come back ! Come back climbing the
Eastern sky !
Our souls are deathless though our flesh
shall die.
Winged are our thoughts, and flash forth
swift and far
Beyond the faint light of the furthest star.

Come back ! or if we meet in some
strange place,
On some dim planet, I shall know thy
face ;
By some weird land, or unimagined sea,
I shall not be afraid, dear, having thee.

THE ALBATROSS.

UPON the lone Australian shore,
A chance-sent traveller's careless eye,
Saw a white bird swoop down and lie
With wide wings that should soar no
more.

A feeble quiver shook the bird,
A film the glazing eye o'erspread ;
Once more the pearly plumage stirred,
And then the Albatross was dead.

He spread the giant pinions wide,
When 'neath the snowy down he found
By hands unknown securely bound,
A sea-worn missive safe and sound.

And when the blotted page he read,
This message bore it from the sea—
“ Five shipwrecked sailors, mourned as
dead,
A thousand miles from land are we ;

“ Whoe'er thou art whose hand shall
take
Our poor winged messenger, we pray
That thou wilt spare him for our sake,
And send him scatheless on his way.

“ Hardly we hope our words shall find
Response, save by some blessed chance :
Good friend who readest this be kind,
And speed us to our well-loved France.”

The traveller stood and musing read,
Some new-born pity filled his breast,
Seeing that poor envoy lie at rest,
The living speaking thro' the dead.

And soon to save those helpless men,
A stont ship, many a weary mile
Sailed forth, and found their lonely isle,
And sped them to their homes again.

But I, as o'er this tale I stay
My wandering fancy, seem to hear,
A voice which comes my heart to cheer,
A silent voice which seems to say,

“ Thus is it with the world around,
For tho' the messenger be gone,
Some winged thought with his being
bound,
O'er all the world goes echoing on.

“ And though its tones sound faint and
weak,
Lost in the rude world's clamorous strife,
The message of dead lips can speak
To souls in prison, words of life ! ”

IN A GREAT LADY'S ALBUM.

FLIT softly, Muse, on hesitating wing,
Through this fair pleasureance, vowed to
Prince and King.

Here, ranged apart, as in some leafy glade,
Monarchs and statesmen court the grateful shade ;
Poets and warriors side by side are found,
And the grove echoes with harmonious sound.
Science, with steady gaze and tranquil eye,
And Faith triumphant soaring to the sky,
The immemorial East delights to bring
Its tribute to the clear Castalian spring.
Where'er we stray some nobler foot has trod,
And the awed gazer knows a demi-god.

Dreadst thou with daring pinion to invade
The solitudes for finer natures made ?
Nay, halt not ! Spread thy wings and raise thy song !
Better the feebly right than basely strong ?
Thou, too, art like to these, and with them one
In nature, as the star is with the Sun.
Here whoso greatly daring enters in,
This truth shall learn, "the whole wide world is kin."
From Prince to boor, old East, and larger West,
One Truth, one Right, one Wisdom is confess ;
One hate of Wrong, one love of nobler Thought ;
One reverence for the universal Ought ;
One worship of the one pervading Name,
Through varying voices heard and yet the same !

ON A SILVER WEDDING.

MARCH 10, 1888.

THE rapid tide of gliding years
Flows gently by this Royal home,
Un vexed by clouds of grief and tears
Its tranquil seasons come.

To one, as happy and more great,
Came earlier far, the dread alarm,
The swift immedicable harm,
The icy voice of Fate.

The gracious father of his race
Heard it, too soon, and dared the night ;
Death coming found him with the light
Of Sunshine on his face.

He left his widowed Queen to move
Alone in solitary sway,
Alone, through her long after-day,
But for her people's love.

Their saintly daughter, sweet and mild,
Drew poison from her darling's breath ;
Their young son trod the paths of death
Far, far from love and child.

Nay, now by the Ausonian sea,
Daughter of England, good and wise !
Thou watchest, with sad anxious eyes,
Thy flower of chivalry !

But this fair English home no shade
Of deeper sorrow comes to bier,
No grief for dear ones who are not,
Nor voids which years have made.

One sickness only, when its head
Lay long weeks, wrestling sore with death,
And pitying England held her breath
Despairing, round his bed.

ON A SILVER WEDDING.

No regal house of crowned state,
Nor lonely as the homes of kings
Where the slow hours on leaden wings
Oppress the friendless great.

But lit with dance and song and mirth,
And graceful Art, and thought to raise,
Crushed down by long labours days,
The toiler from the earth.

It's Lord an English noble, strong
For public cares, for homely joys,
A Prince among the courtly throng,
A brother with his boys.

Who his Sire's footsteps loves to tread,
In prudent schemes for popular good ;
And strives to raise the multitude,
Remembering the dead.

And having seen how far and wide
Flies England's flag, by land and sea,
Would bind in willing unity
Her strong sons side by side.

Its gentle mistress, fair and sweet,
A girlish mother, clothed with grace,
With only summer on her face,
Howe'er the swift years fleet.

Who was the Vision of our youth,
Who is the Exemplar of our prime,
Sweet Lady, breathing Love and Truth,
With charms which vanquish Time.

Good sons in flowering manhood free,
Girls fair in budding womanhood,
An English household bright and good,
A thousand such there be !

Great Heaven, how brief our Summers
show !
And fleeting as the flying Spring !

The almonds blush, the throstles sing,
The vernal wind-flowers blow.

And yet 'tis five-and-twenty years,
Since those March violets dewy-sweet,
Were strewn before the maiden's feet,
Amidst a people's cheers.

And mile on mile the acclaiming crowd
Surged round her, as the soft Spring air
With joy-bells reeled, and everywhere
Roared welcome deep and loud.

While this, our trivial life to-day,
Loomed a dim perilous landscape
strange,
Hid by thick mists of Time and Change,
Unnumbered leagues away.

Long years ! long years ! and yet how
nigh
The dead Past shows, and still how far
The Future's hidden glimpses are
From mortal brain and eye.

What secrets here shall Time unfold ?
What fates befall this gracious home ?
Shall to-day's festal once more come,
Ripened with time to gold ?

Heaven send it ! Close-knit hearts are
here,
Not that old hate of sire and heir ;
Here flourish homely virtues fair,
And love that conquers fear.

For these may Fortune grant again
Their Sovereign's large and blameless
life,
Unmarred by care, undimmed by strife,
Less touched than Hers by pain !

High set above the noise and dust
Of Faction, and contented still
To guide aright the popular will,
By sympathy and trust !

Through civic wisdom temperate,
And forethought for the general need,
Keeping midst change of politic creed,
A Throne, a People great !

THE INVINCIBLE ARMADA, 1588.

'TIS a fair eve at midsummer, three hundred years ago,
Drake and his bold sea captains all are out on Plymouth Hoe ;
They are busy at bowls, brave gentlemen, with jovial mirth and jest,
When watching eyes spy far away a sail upon the West.

A sail ! ten sail ! a hundred sail ! nay nigh two hundred strong !
And up the sea they swiftly climb in battle order long :
Their high main-royals rake the skies, as in a crescent wide,
Like a thick wood, full seven miles broad, they sail on side by side.

There is swift alarm and hurry then, but never a thought of fear,
As the seamen, with the falling night, behold the Don draw near.
"Ring out the bells," cries Hawkins, and across the darkling main,
England peals out defiance to the gathered hosts of Spain.

They do not fear the Don, not they, who on the Spanish main,
Have fought his might and lowered his pride, again and yet again ;
And yet 'tis fearful odds they face, when they sail forth to meet,
Spain and her great Armada with the puny English fleet.

And the streets grow thronged with seamen, and the crowds begin to shout,
And quick oars dash and sails are set, before the stars come out.
They weigh their anchors with a will, and out they speed to sea,
Where up the Channel, stately, slowly, forge the enemy.

Now St. George for merry England, and St. James for Papal Spain, •
Our seamen are our chieftest hope, nor shall we trust in vain.
We have quenched the fires of Smithfield, and no more, 'fere God, we swear,
Shall they ever again flame upward, through our sweet, free, English air.

Now when they neared the foeman, as he loomed across the sea,
Lord Howard led the English van, a Catholic Lord was he,
And his great Ark Royal thundered out her broadsides loud and long,
With Drake and Robisher hard by, and heroes in a throng.

But never a gun the Spaniards fired, but silent ploughed and slow,
 As bisons in a sullen herd across the prairies go ;
 And behind them close, like hunters swift, with hounds that snarl and bite,
 The English squadrons followed through the breezy summer night.

They could see the Dons' high lanterns, in a brilliant crescent flare,
 They could catch the Black Friars' moaning chant upon the midnight air.
 All night they pressed them close, and ere the sun began to flame,
 Long miles away, by blue Torbay, the warring galleons came.

Soon as the dawn began to glow, the guns began to roar,
 All day the thundering navies fought along the Dorset shore,
 Till Portland frowned before them, in the distance dark and grim,
 And again the night stole downward, and the ghostly cliffs grew dim.

And already, praised be God, who guides the patriots' noble strife,
 Though not an English flag is lost, and scarce an English life,
 De Valdez yields his ship and sword, and into Weymouth Bay,
 They tow Oquenda's burning bark, the galleon of Biscay.

Day fades in night, 'mid stress of fight, and when to waking eyes,
 Freshwater's ghostly sea cliffs, and the storm-worn Needles rise,
 From a score of sheltered inlets on the smiling Solent sea,
 England comes forth to aid her sons, with all her chivalry.

There sails my Lord of Cumberland, and he of Oxford too,
 Brave Raleigh and Northumberland, and Grenville and Carew.
 As to a field of honour hasten knights of deathless fame,
 To meet the blue blood of Castile, the flower of England came.

Then with the wind, the foe faced round, and hissing o'er the blue,
 Forth from his losty broadsides vast his hurtling missiles flew ;
 Long time the fight confusedly raged, each man for his own hand ;
 St. George ! protect our country, and the freedom of our land !

See here round brave Ricaldes thick the English levies press !
 See there the keels from London town, hemmed round and in distress !
 Such thunder sure upon the seas was never heard before,
 As the great ordnance smite the skies with one unceasing roar !

Now when the fifth day of the fight was come, St. James's Day,
 The sea was like a sheet of glass, the wind had died away,

And from out the smoke clouds looming vast, churning the deep to foam,
Driven by three hundred oars the towering galliasses come.

But ere they neared the English line, a furious iron hail
Of chain-shot and of grape-shot crashed through mast and ear and sail ;
No more they could, they turned and fled, upon our English sea,
Not yet such furious hatred raged, or stubborn bravery.

And upon the steep white walls of cliff and by the yellow sand,
With pike and musket hurrying down the sturdy peasants stand,
And the trembling women kneel and call upon the Holy name,
And watch the thick black cloud which bursts in murderous jets of flame.

Now St. George for our old England ! for the Don has turned and fled,
With many a strong ship sunk or burnt, and gallant seaman dead,
And by the last day of the week, the warring squadrons lie,
The foeman moored in Calais roads, the English watching by.

They sent for aid to Parma, for they were sore beset,
But the Duke was at St. Mary's shrine, and could not succour yet,
For by Nieuport and by Dunkirk, stern, immovable as Fate,
With stalwart ships, and ordnance strong, the Dutchmen guard the gate.

Now that great Sabbath dawns at last, and from the foeman's fleet,
The deep mass-music rises, and the incense sickly-sweet,
And beneath the flag of England, stern, with dauntless hearts and high,
The seamen take the bread and wine, and rise prepared to die.

Then came Lord Henry Seymour, with a message from Her Grace,
And Sir Francis read the missive with grave triumph on his face,
And he sware an oath, that come what would, her orders should be done
Before the early rose of dawn proclaimed the coming sun.

And the summer daylight faded, and 'twas midnight on the wave,
And among the close-moored galleons, all was silent as the grave,
And the bright poop lanterns rose and fell with the breathing of the deep,
And silent rode the towering hulls, with the weary crews asleep.

When two brave men of Devon, for Sir Francis bade them go,
With all sail set before the wind, stole down upon the foe ;
And before the drowsy watchmen woke, the swift destruction came,
As with a blaze of wildfire leapt the fireships into flame !

Then from the close-thronged ships of Spain loud cries of terror rise,
As from their burning ranks the glare flares upward to the skies,
With cables cut, and sails half set, they drift into the night,
And many are crushed, and many burn, and some are sunk outright.

And the watchers on the Dover Cliffs know well what thing has been,
And for noble England cheer aloud, and for her Maiden Queen.
No more, no more, great England, shalt thou bow thy head again
Beneath the Holy Office and the tyranny of Spain !

And the conquering English followed, and upon the Flanders shore,
Hopeless the shattered galleons fought, till fight they could no more.
And some went down with all their crews, and some beat helplessly
Upon the yeasty quicksands of the perilous Northern Sea.

Then Sidonia with the remnant, shattered ships and wounded men,
Fled northward, with the foe in chase, hoping for Spain again :
But by the Orkneys, lo ! the Lord blew with a mighty wind,
And on the cruel Irish West they left two score behind.

And the savage kerns of Desmond, when the stormy winds were o'er,
Robbed the thronged corpses of the great, upon the lonely shore.
There, in his gold-laced satins, lay the Prince of Asculè,
'Mid friars, and seamen drowned and dead, and Dons of high degree.

Or faint with hunger and with thirst, though rescued from the wave,
The haughty Spaniards knew in turn the misery of the slave.
They ate the captives' bitter bread, they who brief weeks ago
Sailed forth in high disdain and pride to lay our England low.

And the scattered remnant labouring back to Spain and life again,
Left fourscore gallant ships behind and twice ten thousand men ;
And when in dole and misery this great emprise was done,
There was scarce a palace in all Castile which did not mourn a son.

Let not their land forget the men who fought so good a fight !
Still shall our England keep undimmed their fame, their memory bright.
And if again the foemen come in power upon the main,
May she find sons as strong as those who broke the might of Spain !

ODE SUNG AT THE FIRST CO-OPERATIVE FESTIVAL.

AUGUST 17, 1888.

COME let us sing together a new song,
The triumph of the weak made strong ;
The victories of peace we celebrate,
Not those of war and hate.
The victories of peace, won after many
days :
Let us our voices tune to joy and
praise ;
Come let us sing a new and happy
song !

Time was when by his too-great toil
bowed down,
The worker feared his master's frown ;
For some scant wage chained to his
hopeless task,
Nor ever dared to ask
For his young lives and piteous gains
afraid,
A fitting share of that his hands had
made ;
But now through union strong, the
workers claim their own.

There is red war not fought with sword
or gun,
Where, in deep peace, war's wrong is
done ;
Where face to face in hostile camps
they stand
Who should clasp hand with hand :
The rich man waning slow in soulless
ease,
The poor man spent by toils and
miseries.
Sing we a cheerful song, Time's curse
is almost done.

Ay, almost done, but ah ! not wholly
yet ;
Let not too sanguine souls forget
Those for whom no man taketh thought
or heed,
The hearts, the lives that bleed.
Let not our workers, strong in brother-
hood,
Forget the friendless toiler's starving
brood.
Mixt be our song with joy, yet not all
cheerful yet.

Yet for to-day, at least, let us rejoice,
Uplifting jubilant heart and voice.
Not what has been we hymn, but what
shall be ;
Not the old misery,
But the new days when Man beneath
the power
Of peaceful union blooms a perfect
flower—
For this we choose not sorrow, but
rejoice.

We come to-day in this our solemn
mirth,
Bringing the flowers, the fruits, of earth,
Reared by strong hands which labour
glorifies.
Toil, honest toil we prize—
Look round and see how rich the har-
vest grows,
The mellow fruits, the perfumed rose
that glows
Raised by untiring toil from our good
mother Earth.

See how to-day the long drawn vistas fill
With fruit of every toiler's skill,
The man's strong gains, the woman's
deft and fine ;
Here heart and brain combine

In pitying succour for the weak and dumb ;
Here are fair schemes, to build the happy home,
And children's work, and play, than work more precious still.

Therefore do we make merry and are glad ;
No care to-day shall make us sad.
We sing the song of wider brotherhood,
Knit close for general good.
We sing the higher social sense which binds
Each for the general good, opposing minds.
We hail thee, blessed Union, and are glad !
And sing aloud together a new and cheerful song !

TO JOHN BRIGHT.

MARCH 27, 1889.

FRIEND of the friendless else, and art thou dead ?
Great Master of our vigorous Saxon speech,
Unwearied pleader for the people's bread,
Hater of war, strong to convince and teach,
With passionate faith and indignation strong,
Mighty to slay the hydra-heads of wrong.

Thy voice was ayé for Freedom, and thy heart
Warlike for Peace, since o'er the open grave

Of thy young love, thou didst accept thy part
To strike the shameful setters from the slave,
To lift the toiler from his hopeless lot,
To plant the civic sense where it was not.

Thy soul was reared on fitting food ; thy tongue,
Touched with our older England's purest fire ;
The noblest strains our Island Muse has sung,
Shakspeare and Milton did thy speech inspire :
The poets taught thy rhythmic periods strong ;
And thy impetuous flights were winged with song.

Thou couldst not brook the faithless souls that dread
To follow Right and leave the rest to God ;
No selfish fear of careless riches bred
Might turn thee from the path by Duty trod.
England thou lovedst, and beyond set of sun
A greater England still, and both made one !

Thy friend and comrade went his way alone ;
Long years ago God called him, and he went.
To him thy speech has reared, than sculptured stone,
A statelier and more lasting monument.

Long time were ye reviled, scorned,
hated ; now
A people's homage crowns each
reverend brow.

Champion of Freedom, by thy hearse
shall I
Keep silence —I who owe thee much
indeed ?
A Prince among the People comes to
die,
And shall no grateful son of verse
take heed ?
Nay, on thy grave, ere falls the
earth, I lay
This simple wreath to deck thy
honoured clay !

ON ROBERT BLAKE.

ENGRAVED ON THE BRASS IN ST.
MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER.

KINGDOM or Commonwealth were less
to thee,
Than to crown England Queen o'er
every sea.
Strong sailor, sleeping sound as sleep
the just,
Rest here ! our Abbey keeps no wor-
thier dust !

TO LORD TENNYSON.

ON HIS EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY,
AUGUST 6, 1889.

MASTER and seer ! too swift on noise-
less feet
Thy hurrying decades fleet with
stealthy pace ;

Yet not the less thy voice is clear and
sweet,
And still thy genius minglest strength
with grace.
On thy broad brow alone and
reverend face
Thy four-score winters show, not on thy
mind.
Stay, Time, a little while thy head-
long chase !
Or passing, one Immortal leave behind ;
For we are weak, and changeful as the
wind.

For him long since the dying swan
would sing,
The dead soul pine in splendid misery.
He winged the legend of the blameless
King,
And crossed to Lotusland the en-
chanted sea ;
Heard the twin voices strive for
mastery,
Faithful and faithless ; and with pre-
scent thought
Saw Woman rising in the days to be
To heights of knowledge in the past
unsought ;
These his eye marked, and those his
wisdom taught.

And he it was whose musing ear o'er-
heard
The love-tale sweet in death and
madness end ;
Who sang the deathless dirge, whose
every word
Fashions a golden statue for his
friend.
May all good things his waning years
attend
Who told of Rizpah mourning for her
dead !

Or in verse sweet as pitying ruth
could lend
The childish sufferer on her hopeless
bed ;
Thoughts, pure and high, of precious
fancy bred.

His it is still to scan with patient eye
The book of Nature, writ with herb
and tree ;
The buds of March unfold, the lush
flowers die,
When sighs of Autumn wail o'er land
and sea,
And those great orbs which wheel from
age to age,
Cold, unregarding fires that seem to
blight
All yearning hope and chill all noble
rage ;
And yet were dead, and void, maybe,
of light,
Till first they swam upon a mortal's
sight.

Master and friend, stay yet, for there is
none
Worthy to take thy place to-day, or
wear
Thy laurel when thy singing-days are
done.
As yet the halls of song are mute and
bare,
Nor voice melodious wakes the tune-
less air,
Save some weak faltering accents faintly
heard.
Stay with us ; 'neath thy spell the
world grows fair.
Our hearts revive, our inmost souls are
stirred,
And all our English race awaits thy
latest word !

TO HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN,

REVISITING WALES.

AUGUST 24, 1889.

WELCOME, dear Lady, welcome once
again,

To thine own land—nor for the last
time come.

Small is our Gwalia, but a fair domain,
Who comes to her comes home.

Come now and often, still our warm
hearts burn,

Though the swift winters close or dim
the eyes

That saw thee last ; to thee our spirits
turn,

Still to our lips true words of welcome
rise.

Dear Lady ! welcome, welcome home !
Our Cymric eyes grow bright to see
our Sovereign come.

Once long ago, didst thou, a careless
child,

With smooth young brow, on which the
Imperial Crown

Weighed not as yet, amidst our hill-
sides wild

Abide, and with thine own
Didst spend thy Springtime's joyous
hours and bright,

Safe-guarded by a mother's tender care.
Then all the unfolding world showed
clear and fair

To thy unwearied mind and eager sight ;
Ah ! it is blest indeed to be
In life's young morn with all fair things
to see !

And then thou camest to thy Wales
once more.

In happy wedlock, by the knightly arm

Of thy new Arthur, sheltered safe from
harm,
By Menai's sounding shore,
Strong in Love's strength, as one who
seemed to bear
A potent talisman to shield from
ill.
But what defence averts the stroke of
care,
Or blunts the shafts of Heaven's mys-
terious will !
Grief dwelt with thee long time, but
now
The crown of Resignation decks thy
brow.

Dear Lady, we are feeble folk, and
weak,
But our old tongue and loyal hearts we
keep ;
We cherish still the love we may not
speak--
The old affection deep.
Still is our Wales "a sea of song," and
still
From smiling valley, and from soaring
hill,
Eryni's snows and fair Clwyd's verdant
plain,
Or that strange shrine upon the Western
Main,
There comes a universal voice
Of welcome to our Queen, bidding all
hearts rejoice.

What are they all but phantoms fleeting
past,
Weak creatures of a day, which but a
day may last ?

But the great Scheme
Fares on its course
Tho' Time's long dream
Of changing force,
It saw the plesiosaur and mastodon
Wax strong, and dwindle down, and
still goes silent on.

It saw the ape
Rule every land,
The cave-man shape
Flints for his hand.
It saw a thousand generations pass
Across life's mournful stage, like visions
in a glass.

It saw the strange
Forgotten Kings,
Ages of change,
Terrible things,
It saw the Egyptian and Assyrian come,
The gay Hellenic bloom, the rugged
sway of Rome.

These too it saw
Totter and fall,
A puret law
O'er-ruling all,
And then the arrested march, the long
delay,
The baffled hope, the Dawn fading to
common day.

VENITE PROCIDAMUS.

Our hopes, our fear,
Our love and hate,
Our joys and tears,
Our throws with fate,

It makes no cry,
It lifts no voice,
Tho' all things die,
Tho' all rejoice,

It goes unceasing onward, blind and dumb,	Is only heard By the inner ear,
Nor halts, nor hastens, nor heeds what- ever things may come.	No outward light it is which can illumine
Eternal Scheme. Great Lord of all, August, Supreme, Prostrate we fall,	The spiritual eye, and pierce the on- shrouding gloom.
We cannot know Thy working, nor its end,	An inborn light, An inner voice, Which burneth bright, Which doth rejoice,
Nor by what hidden paths Thy Perfect Will may lead.	A Faith in things unseen, an inward sight *
But if one word Might come, or sign, Our souls were stirred To growths divine,	Which thro' a wrecked world sees the victory of Right
No longer should we walk in fear and doubt,	With this our guide, Our strength, our stay, No more aside
Lake children in dark ways, before the stars come out.	Our footsteps stray.
Ah no! the word The soul can hear	Fulfil Thyself, Great Scheme, Eternal Plan,
	Work out - we ask no word — the Destiny of Man.

